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THE CHOICEST WORKS OF THE MOST POPULAR AUTHORS

KARAIBO





KARAIBO;

OR,

THE OUTLAW'S FATE.

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AUTHOR OF "PRAIRIE CHICK," "LOST CACHE," ETC.

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K A R A I B O.

CHAPTER I.

A BOASTFUL VILLAIN.

THE September wind whistled shrilly around a ranch near the base of the southern tier of the Sierra Nevada. Over the arid plain that stretched to the west, broken and seamed by gullies and arroyas, the breeze came laden with the perfume of pines and cedars and other balm-bearing trees. Toward the east rose hills that were covered with a tawny growth of wild oats, succeeded by parallel waves of pine-topped mountains, beyond which, snow-crowned, and gleaming through the autumn haze, towered the frozen summits of the Nevada.

The ranch was a very old and low building, erected by some native Californian, before *los Yankis*, allured by the golden sands, had brought new customs and new styles into the country. Its sun-dried walls were badly cracked, presenting a "plotchy" appearance where the clay had fallen off, and the broken roof was abundantly thatched with tulé stalks, forming a desirable abiding-place for prolific families of fleas. Over the door was a weather-beaten sign, the rude inscription denoting that the ranch was some sort of a *fonda*, or inn. A haystack that stood by the side of the house, and a scanty array of bottles in one of the discoloured windows, hinted at what was not fully explained by the sign.

We will enter this unpromising place of entertainment,

in the company of a traveller who has just arrived. We have no choice but to enter, for we would be obliged to travel a *journada*—a long day's journey—before reaching another resting-place, and it is probable that we should then find it no better than this.

The traveller with whom we propose to enter is by no means prepossessing in appearance. In fact, he is not such a man as you would like to meet, if you were travelling alone, with valuables about your person. His coarse, wiry hair, and his heavy beard, are streaked with grey ; his face is disfigured by a scar that reaches from the left cheek-bone to the corner of the mouth ; and his small, restless eyes, have a malicious twinkle that is quite repulsive at times. He is dressed in a leather hunting-shirt and breeches, with fringed leggings, his head is covered with a bear-skin cap, a Mexican *serape* is thrown over his shoulders, and a heavy blanket is strapped on his saddle. His other equipments are his rifle and his horse ; the former is a long, heavy, and serviceable weapon, and the latter is evidently not of the Californian breed. A fine and powerful animal is that horse, and he has trod, with equal security, if not with equal ease, the soft turf of the prairie and the dangerous defiles of precipitous mountain ranges. His owner seems to appreciate his value and to take pride in him, for the animal is decked out in gaudy trappings, and his skin shines like satin.

The traveller dismounts, unceremoniously ties his horse to the haystack, drops his rifle into the hollow of his arm, loosens a sheath-knife in his belt, and opens the door of the house, with the air of a man who is accustomed to carry his life in his hands, and who is doubtful about the character of the company he may meet.

As we enter we perceive that the small and low-ceiled

room, which constitutes the principal apartment of the fonda, is occupied by about a dozen persons, not two of whom appear to belong to the same nation or country. The landlord is a lean and sallow Mexican, while his wife, who stands behind the dirty bar, is a buxom and rosy-cheeked Irish woman, who might have had her "pick" of husbands at the diggings. A dark-complexioned youth, who passed as their son, seemed kin to neither of them. A long and lank miner was drinking six bits' worth of blue ruin with a short and fat Frenchman. A sharp-featured Yankee was making abstruse calculations on a board with a piece of chalk, and a fluffy-faced Englishman, who sat opposite him, was shivering with the ague, and undoubtedly wishing himself hout of the 'orrid 'ole. In one corner stood a moody Malay, dressed in a woful imitation of civilized costume, but wearing a turban on his head and a wicked-looking creese in his belt. In the other corner, as a companion picture, a bronzed Sonorian glared fiercely at all intruders in his country, of whatever clime or nation. A well-dressed young man, with dark hair and eyes, was reading a newspaper by a window, and an old Mexican, with a broad sombrero drawn over his face, slumbered on a blanket by the wall of the wretched hovel.

"How are ye, strangers all?" said the new-comer, as he strode into the room, and cast an inquisitive and defiant glance around him,

"I reckon, missus," he continued, with an admiring gaze at the comely figure behind the bar, "that you allow to be the boss of this tavern, and I should think, judgin' from your looks, that you expect to do the right thing by man and beast. I tied my hoss to a haystack outside, and I want him took extry good car' of, bein' as he's a

useful crittur' to me. As fur this child, he allows that he can take tol'able good car' of himself."

This was a long speech for Burt Adams—for such was the traveller's name; but he evidently wished to impress the guests of the inn with a sense of his dignity and importance.

While the landlady was giving directions to the lad, who was called Miguel by his father, and Mike by his mother, Burt Adams stepped up to the dingy bar, and thumped upon it with his fist.

"Come, now, strangers all!" he exclaimed. "I reckon it ain't often you git a mountain man down among you, with his pocket full of rocks. Come up, now, and jine me in suthin' warmin', so's to make us lively and sociable like."

This invitation, which was intended to be delivered in a frank and off-hand manner, was not generally accepted. The long miner and the fat Frenchman were willing to repeat their doses of poison; the Mexican landlord and the fierce Sonorian sulkily responded; and the Yankee, seeing a chance to get something for nothing, "guessed he might as well." The Englishman could think of nothing but his own agony; the Malay and the young man who was reading did not stir; and the old Mexican still slumbered on his blanket.

Burt Adams growled as he glanced savagely at those who remained behind, but he did not renew his invitation. He gulped down his three fingers of poison, and seated himself on a box, where he launched forth into a boastful recital of the exploits and perils of his adventurous life. As his narrative was mingled with frequent calls upon the landlady, his listeners were reasonably attentive; but it was soon evident that the fiery potations were having

their effect upon the brain of the mountaineer. Of a sudden, he turned, and fixed his eyes sharply on the dark face of the silent Malay.

"What in thunder are you lookin' at me fur, you durned nigger?" he rudely exclaimed.

"Not lookin' at you, sah," answered the Malay, without raising his eyes from the floor. "Malay man not so much nigger, neither."

"Not a nigger? Either your skin lies, or you do. Wonder what a Malay is, anyhow."

"The Malay," answered the Yankee, anxious to display his learning, even if he got nothing for it, "is a race—"

"Oh, bother your races! What do those yaller fellers know about racin'? I've got a hoss that I'll put ag'in anythin' in these parts fur a solid mile. Don't you be handlin' that crooked knife of your'n, you dirty Chineeser, or whatever you are. I could send a bullet through your head afore you could draw that thing."

The young man who was reading, quietly raised his right hand to the left breast-pocket of his coat, and suffered his eyes to stray over the margin of his newspaper.

"Didn't touch knife," replied the Malay. "Don't want bullet."

"Better be keerful, then," growled the mountaineer, "and don't give me none of your black looks, fur I'm a white man, I am."

The young man at the window withdrew his hand from his pocket, and fixed his eyes again on his paper. Burt Adams settled himself on his box, and recommenced his boastful recitals.

"I reckon it's nigh about ten years," said he, "sence I was in these parts, and then I had a glorious time of it,

sure as I'm a livin' sinner. What with bein' half starved on the plains and in the mount'ins, what with gittin' mixed up with Apaches and other rantankerous red-skins, and what with a heap of other troubles and fusses, I was mighty nigh used up, and wuss than all, was flat broke, without a shiner in my pocket. Of course, I had to make a raise somehow. A man without money and without friends is of mighty small account in a strange country. But you don't ketch Burt Adams stayin' long in a tight place. I tell you, strangers, this beaver ain't easy trapped. I made my raise, and a capital one it was too."

At these words, which were spoken in a high tone, the old Mexican, who was asleep on the floor, opened his eyes, and partially removed his sombrero from his face.

"Naow, I'd jest like to know heow yeou did that thing," insinuated the Yankee. "Guess yeou didn't take to school-teachin' or peddlin', did yeou?"

"What!" thundered the mountaineer. "Do you take this hoss for a white-livered, psalm-singin', punkin'-growin' fool from the *settlements*? I was raised among the mount'ins, I was, and got my l'arnin' from the b'ars and bufflers and the cussed red-skins. I went to work like a man. I heard of an old greaser who had heaps of shiners hid away, and who lived on the side of the sierra yonder, with nobody but his darter and a mestizo Injun. It would have been doin' myself a wrong to let such a chance slip; so I went thar' to stay all night. When all was still, I quietly knifed the mestizo, but the old chap heard the fuss, and came at me. As I was fighting in self-defence, I soon gave him a settler, and then I had everything my own way. I tied the gal, picked up all the gold and silver I could find, and struck a bee-line for the north!"

It was a story of cold-blooded murder and robbery, told in a boastful manner, that made it seem doubly atrocious. Its effect upon some of the listeners was marked. The young man at the window shuddered, and bit his lip. The Malay quickly raised his head, with a wild expression on his swarthy countenance. The old Mexican in the blanket gasped as if he was being suffocated, and glared at the speaker with his sunken eyes. The Yankee seemed horror-struck, but ventured to ask the mountaineer if he was not afraid of being arrested.

"Look a-here, stranger!" exclaimed Adams, turning upon him savagely, "ef you are an alcalde, or anything of that sort, you had better be gittin' out of this ranch; if not, it will be safest for you to hold your tongue. Dead men tell no tales, and nothin' could be proved ag'in me."

"Did you leave the gal?" asked the miner.

"Ketch this hoss bein' sech a fool as that! I had a bargain in her, fur she was as purty as a pictur', and I sold her to some Injuns that I knew, on t'other side of the mountains, but I ain't going to tell whar'."

The old Mexican raised himself on his elbow, and gazed earnestly at the audacious outlaw.

"Hello, old chap!" said Adams. "So you've woke up at last. What do you mean by grinning at me in that way? Think you'll know me when you see me ag'in?"

The Mexican muttered something indistinctly, laid down, and covered his face with his sombrero.

"Your lodge is too crowded for this beaver to stay in it long, missus," said the mountaineer. "I reckon I'll pay what I owe you, and make tracks for the timber."

"Far'well, strangers all!" he said, as, having settled

his bill, he strode out of the house, in the same defiant manner in which he had entered it.

The young man at the window whispered to the Malay over the edge of his paper.

“ Did you ever see that man before, Karaibo ?”

“ Never see him.”

“ Do you like him ?”

“ Do I like a snake or a panther ?”

“ Would you know him if you should see him again ?”

“ Know him mighty well.”

“ Follow him, Karaibo. Be a dog on his track. Watch where he goes, and learn all you can about him. I must go to the coast, and will meet you there.”

The dark-skinned foreigner glided out of the room so stealthily, that his departure was almost unobserved.

In a few moments the old Mexican rose from the floor, threw his blanket on his shoulders, drew his sombrero down over his eyes, and stalked gloomily away, carefully closing the door of the fonda behind him.

CHAPTER II.

KARAIBO ATTENDS TO BUSINESS.

BURT ADAMS spoke the truth, when he said that the fonda was too crowded for him. He was accustomed to the open air, and to life in tents and wigwams ; and a civilized bed, even if the inn could have afforded a passable one, would have been only a nuisance and a torment to him. Besides, he was sufficiently sober to know that he was *not* sober, and he felt that, however well he might be able to “take care of himself” when awake, he might find it dangerous to fall asleep in a small and crowded building.

Accordingly, he went to the haystack, untied his horse, and slowly rode off toward a clump of timber that was situated about three miles to the northward. A dark figure, wrapped in a mantle, watched him as he went, and then cautiously followed him, at a considerable distance.

It was now about dusk, and the mountaineer, thinking of no pursuit or surveillance, did not look behind him. If he had, he would not have perceived the dark figure in the brown hat and tawny blanket, so near the colour of the wild oats through which he moved.

Adams reached and entered the clump of timber, which was situated on a little knoll, near the base of the mountain. The trees were scattered, and there was good grass yet growing among them. The outlaw selected the most open spot, picketed his horse with a long lariat, rolled himself up in his blanket, and laid down to sleep near the picket. Before closing his eyes, he whistled to his horse, which, obedient as a dog, came to his call.

"Bill, my boy," said he, "this child is goin' to stretch out, and you must keep watch. Mind that, and don't let your eyes or ears fool you."

He evidently considered this a sufficient precaution, for he was slumbering, in a few minutes, as soundly as if his conscience was as clear as that of a child.

The trained and sagacious horse walked quietly around the outlaw as he slept, seeming to take care not to entangle him in the long lariat, and only now and then picking up a mouthful of grass. About an hour had passed, and the moon, struggling through broken patches of clouds, was showing a fitful light, when the animal suddenly stopped, pricked up his ears, and stood in an attitude of strained attention. Then he moved to another point in the circle, and again appeared to listen intently. He had snuffed

danger in the air, for he returned to his master's side, and pawed the ground.

The outlaw, overcome by his fiery potations, slept like a log.

The horse neighed and whinnied, but the noise failed to arouse him.

Then the animal bent his head, seized the blanket with his teeth, and shook it.

Burt Adams sprung to his feet, and gazed wildly around him. As he did so, a shot came from the edge of the timber, and a bullet whistled by his ears.

He snatched his rifle, and hastened in the direction from which the shot proceeded, but he could find no enemy, nor any trace of one. He thought that he saw a strange motion in the wild oats on the plain below, and fired at the spot, but with no visible result. It was too dark to follow the trail, even if he could find it; so, with a muttered curse, he returned to his "camp," kindled a fire, and prepared to watch out the night.

"You kept good guard, Bill," he said, stroking his horse. "You're all right, old boy; but I was a stupid fool, and slept like a b'ar kyled up in winter. Reckon I won't resk stretchin' out ag'in, Bill, and you can take your turn now. I'll wager they won't ketch this beaver asleep once more."

Leaving his fire, he wandered about in the edges of the clump of timber, watching, with the eye of a practised hunter and mountaineer, for any sign of his secret assailant; but he neither saw nor heard anything more until morning dawned. Then he went to the spot from which he supposed the shot had come, and there he found indications which clearly showed him that a man had crawled up the side of the knoll from the plain. He

followed the marks for a short distance among the patches of oats, and was satisfied.

"I'd foller that trail," he said, "ef thar' was any use into it; but I know jest whar' it will come out—at that cussed ranch they call a fondy, down yonder. I just wonder, now, ef that darned yaller-skinned Chineeser, or whatever he is, has been laying fur me. Any of the rest of 'em, though, jest as likely. I'll let 'em know that Burt Adams ain't a man to be skeered, though he mought be caught nappin'."

It was not the dark Malay who fired the shot. He could not have fired it, for he had no weapon, except the creese in his sash. He would not have fired it, if he had been able to do so, for he had not been commissioned to slay the man, but to watch him, to dog his steps, to learn all he could about him.

He followed the outlaw to the clump of timber, and watched him picket his horse and lie down to sleep. He noticed the stealthy approach of another man, and saw him creep up the side of the knoll. He heard the shot, and watched the subsequent proceedings of the assailant and the assailed. He concluded that he could learn nothing more concerning the man whom he had been set to watch by remaining where he was, and thought that this new development might afford him some information. Consequently, he went back to the inn, which was nearly deserted, and waited.

He had not long to wait, for soon another bird of night made his appearance, wearing a broad sombrero and a brown blanket.

It was the old Mexican. With a hasty glance about him, he entered, wrapped himself in his blanket, and laid down on the floor in a corner. He showed no disposition

to sleep, but clasped his hands over his eyes, and sobbed audibly, while his withered frame shook,

“As ’twere with a convulsion.”

Soon the Malay, who had been sitting in the shadow, arose, quietly stepped to the old man, and touched him on the shoulder. The Mexican started up, and his surprise, if not his fright, were increased by seeing the black, piercing eyes of Karaibo, that were fixed upon him with an earnest gaze.

“Don’t be scare,” said the Malay, in a tone of singular softness. “Come with me. Want to speak you.”

“Who are you? What do you want?”

“Don’t be scare. All right. Karaibo is an honest man. Come outside.”

The Mexican seemed to be impressed by the gentleness and sweetness of the voice, for he rose, almost involuntarily, and followed his strange leader out into the air. The Malay led him a short distance from the house, stopped, and looked the old man full in the face.

“Much pain here?” he asked. “You feel much trouble here?”

“Trouble!” ejaculated the Mexican, as he sobbed again. “Yes, yes! May God and the Virgin help me to bear it!”

“Tell Karaibo what’s the matter.”

“Why should I tell you? You cannot help me. Nothing can help me.”

“Maybe so. Cap’n Henry says God sees everything, that He knows even when one very little small bird falls to the ground. S’pose He won’t cure trouble some way?”

“Are you a Christian? I heard you say you were a Malay.”

"Cap'n Henry says Karaibo is sorter good Christian now."

"Who is Captain Henry?"

"My Captain Henry. He was here yes'day. Good man—good, *good*, GOOD, GOOD!"

(Karaibo was not well enough supplied with adjectives to do justice to "Cap'n Henry.")

"Now tell Karaibo what's the matter."

"I do not know why I should trust you."

"Then I tell you. What made you shoot at that man, out in timber, this night?"

The Mexican started, as if he had himself been shot. With an effort he recovered his composure.

"What do you mean? What man? Where?"

"Timber up yonder. Man who told big stories. Horse with long rope. Man asleep on the grass."

The old man's eyes opened wider than ever, and he could not conceal his perplexity.

"How could I shoot at a man," he said, "when I have no gun?"

"Gun hid under haystack."

"How do you know? What have you seen?"

"See you crawl up. See you shoot. Ah! you slid away like a snake!"

The old man covered his face with his hands.

"Don't be scare. All right. Tell Karaibo what's matter."

"I will tell you, and who can say but that God has sent you to be a friend to me?"

The old Mexican, notwithstanding his withered frame and poor apparel, was a man of dignified and gentlemanly appearance, and had evidently, to use the common expression, "seen better days." He drew his blanket

around him, and composed his features to tell of his trouble.

"You heard that man boast how he had murdered a Mexican and his servant, had robbed his house, and had carried away his daughter?"

"Heard mighty well," answered the Malay, with a mild light in his eyes. "He said he was white man and Christian. Not Karaibo's kind of Christian—not like Cap'n Henry. If he send bullet through Karaibo's head, Cap'n Henry shoot him mighty dead."

"I am the Mexican whom he supposed he had murdered, and it was my daughter that he carried off and sold to the Indians. I shot at him; I tried to kill him; for I must be revenged. Revenge is sweet."

"Karaibo knows that; not good enough Christian to forget that—quite. But s'pose some other thing come. S'pose you find the girl, and then kill that man—ah! kill him very, *very* dead then!"

"What do you mean?" eagerly asked the Mexican. "Do not speak to me in that way, unless you have some meaning. Can you hold out any hope to me? Do you think it possible that I might recover my lost one, my Paquita? But no: it is impossible, and if I could recover her as she is, as she must be now, the recovery would be worse than the loss."

The old man again covered his face with his hands, and sobbed.

"Who knows?" solemnly replied the Malay, turning his large dark eyes upward, and pointing with his long forefinger at a patch of clear sky among the scattered clouds. "Karaibo does not know, but God knows. Karaibo has nothing to say, but Cap'n Henry *knows* much—oh, so much! and can do so much! Will you be-

lieve Karaibo, and place your trust in God and Cap'n Henry!"

"I will. What shall I do?"

"Leave gun in haystack," answered the Malay, recurring to his quick-speaking manner. "Go in house—sleep—you need sleep—and pray God. Good-night."

With the docility of a child the Mexican obeyed the instructions of his dark-visaged monitor, and entered the inn. The Malay followed him, and both laid down on the floor.

CHAPTER III.

BURT FINDS AN ALLY.

WITH the first of the dawn Karaibo was awake. Leaving his companion asleep, he glided out of the door of the inn, and went to the haystack, where he illustrated the good effect of the teachings of "Cap'n Henry," kneeling down and repeating a short prayer. The devotional exercise evidently did him good, for there was a bright look in his eyes, and a grateful expression on his swarthy countenance as he rose and glanced towards the east, where the summits of the sierra were reddened by the rising sun. As he cast his eyes northward, he perceived a horseman approaching from that direction, and soon discovered that it was the mountaineer, returning to the fonda. The Malay, with some curiosity and expectation, awaited his arrival.

"Hello, yaller-skin!" was the greeting of the outlaw, as he dismounted, and tied his horse to the haystack. "You're out 'arly this morning? Is there anyone else stirrin' about the ranch?"

"See no other man yet," answered the Malay.

"Did you sleep in that tavern last night?"

"Yes; sleep in there."

"Who else slept there?"

"One old man—sick."

Burt Adams was a little puzzled. If this was the man who made the attack upon him, why had he not fled? The outlaw tried "a new tack."

"You seem to be a purty decent kind of a chap, though your skin ain't as white as it mought be, and though you're a furriner. I've an idee of takin' a little hunt this mornin', and you may go with me if you want to. Thar's none in these parts can show you such sport as Burt Adams can. Would you like to try the fun!"

"Karaibo got no horse—got no gun."

"No horse or gun? We'll have to give it up, then. Don't you ever carry a gun, Karaibo?—if that's your name."

"Sometimes; but gun 'way from hero—far off."

Burt was nearly convinced that the Malay was not guilty, and he resolved to make a confident of him.

"Look a-here, Karaibo; I've got suthin cur'ous to tell you. You know I camped up yonder in the timber."

"Did you?"

"Yes; 'cause I didn't like the crowd in this shanty. While I was sleepin' thar', some cowardly cuss sneaked up and shot at me."

"Many men get shot at."

"That's a fact; but I don't know who could have had anythin' ag'inst me, onless it was my plunder that was wanted. I reckon the feller would have nailed me, if it hadn't been for my hoss, who was keepin' watch. He tuck hold of my blanket, and shuck me till I woke up, and then the shot come."

Mighty good hoss. Did you shoot?"

"Hunted for the cuss, but he had sneaked away like a snake, and I shot to scare him up. I follered the trail, and it led, as I had allowed it would, right to this ranch. Now, Karaibo, if you'll forgit the cross words I spoke to you yesterday, and will help me to find out who that feller was, it won't be anythin' out of your pocket, fur it's wuth while, in these parts, to have Burt Adams fur a friend."

"Maybe the man has gone away—three gone."

In answer to further questions, the Malay stated that the fat Frenchman and the long miner had gone away together early in the evening, and that the Sonorian had left during the night. Besides the Englishman, who was "down" with the ague, himself and the old Mexican were the only remaining guests of the fonda.

"It's tol'able plain now," said the outlaw. "It was that durned Sonorian who tried to rub me out. I do hate a mean and sneakin' cuss, who will crawl upon a man at night, when he's sleepin', and shoot at him in that murderous way."

(Did it occur to Burt Adams that he had often done the same thing? He never missed his aim, however, and never left his victim alive to tell the tale.)

"It was right down rascally of that chap, arter I'd treated him to the best there was in the ranch. I didn't like his looks, nohow, and noticed that he looked mighty greedy when I showed my money. Those Sonora thieves hate an honest American wuss'n p'ison, and would stick at nothin' to rub him out. If my eyes ever light on him ag'in, he'll suffer fur last night's work, as sure as I'm a livin' sinner!"

As the Malay had nothing to say, Burt continued:—

"I've kinder tuk a likin' to you, Karaibo, and I allow that there's more into you than shows itself. S'pose you and I step into the ranch, and fling ourselves outside of a few drops of spirits."

"Can't do it, sah. Much obliged, all same. Cap'n Henry say spirits not good, 'cept when sick."

"Who in thunder is Captain Henry?"

"Man I knew once—mighty good man."

"Too good fur me, I reckon; but p'raps he's right. Fur my part, I want some aguardiente, and then, friend yaller-skin, we'll see if thar's anythin' in this ranch that a hungry man can eat."

Burt Adams satisfied his thirst with the poison at the bar, and then inquired of the buxom landlady concerning more substantial refreshments. On a stool in a corner, with a tray in his lap, and with his broad sombrero still drawn over his face, sat the old Mexican, regaling himself with tortillas, frioles, and a sort of stew that was plentifully seasoned with red pepper. He did not look up from his meal, and was not noticed by the others, unless the dark eyes of the Malay occasionally strayed in the direction of his corner.

As there was nothing else to be had, the outlaw ordered the same repast for himself and the Malay, and sat down to discuss it with his new friend, having persuaded the landlady to add a cup of miserable coffee.

The breakfast was not at all to the liking of the mountaineer, and he soon rose, and beckoned to his companion. Karaibo followed him out of the fonda, and was led to a secluded spot in a gulch at the base of the mountain, where Adams halted.

"Tell you what it is, Karaibo," said he, in a confidential tone, "I've sorter tuck a likin' to you, as I said afore, and

would like to do suthin' fur you, and p'raps you mought help me a little, too. What do you think?"

"Karaibo listens."

"Judgin' from your looks, I reckon you ain't apt to git scared very easy."

"Karaibo knows nothing of fear."

"And I shouldn't wonder if you could shoot a rifle, though you *are* only a poor, ignorant furriner, and though you haven't got your gun with you."

"Karaibo shoots mighty well. Captain Henry taught him."

"May the Old Harry fly away with your Captain Henry," muttered Adams.

"I reckon, too, judgin' from your not carryin' a gun while travellin' in these dangerous parts, that you know how to use that crooked knife of your'n."

The Malay drew his creese from his belt, and smiled as he exhibited its sharp edge.

"That'll do, old yaller-skin. Put up your cheese-cutter, fur it's a wicked-lookin' weepoon in your hands, though I doubt whether a white man could do much with it. Now we'll talk about business. S'pose I was in a desput kind of fix, whar' fightin' was to be done, and the odds was ag'in me. Could I depend on you?"

"Depend? What is depend?"

"Could I reckon on you to stand by me, and help me fight it through?"

"Karaibo stand by, and fight—for pay."

"For *pay*—that's jest what I mean, my yaller-boy. If I can put you in the way to help me git heaps of money and other plunder, and you to have a big divide of it, I reckon you wouldn't feel bad if it wasn't got adzackly in the way folks call honest?"

“ Malay man mighty fond of money—much as American man.”

“ If we should happen to spill a little blood on the way to the plunder, you don’t think it would spile the colour of the gold?”

“ Gold is unchangeable, and nothing can tarnish it,” replied the Malay.

“ I reckon we understand each other, Karaibo. Burt Adams hasn’t been knocked about fur nothin’; he knows men when he sees ’em. With white men, Injuns, and furriners, I’ve alleis had the same luck. Now Karaibo, as we’re goin’ to hunt together, I’ll tell you the game, and show you the trail. Afore long—I don’t adzackly know when—there’s a mighty rich Mexican, with a thunderin’ purty darter, goin’ to start from the coast, to go over the mount’ins and plains to Santa Fé. They’ve got relations livin’ thar’, and are goin’ to see ’em, and to put the gal into a convent somewhar’ They allow to make a mule train, and are bound to carry a plenty of gold and silver, as the old chap has bought some land in those parts, and is goin’ to pay fur it; I reckon. This child is hired to be thar’ guide—that is, it ain’t quite fixed up yet, but it will be. The idee is, to git the plunder. Do you understand, yaller-skin?”

“ Karaibo understands that, brown-skin. Speak on.”

“ Wal, if my skin is brown, I’m a white man, which is more’n you are. Respectin’ the plunder, I don’t allow that we’ll take it ourselves, as they mought be too many fur us. I mean to lead ’em up among the mount’ins, whar’ thar’s an Apache tribe that I know, and they’ll do the work fur us, fur a small divide. I’ve had dealin’s with ’em afore, and know how to treat ’em. I don’t reckon we need be mixed up in any scrimmage, but we

mought be, and I want a good man to stand by me till we git among the Injuns. If you'll do that, Karaibo, you shall jest be loaded down with gold and silver. What do you say now?"

"Karaibo will go—Karaibo will stand by you."

"All right, old yaller-skin! Give me your hand on that. As fur the gal, that's suthin to be thought about at another time. I think thar's a better use fur her than to shet her up in a convent; but that's a different business, you know."

"Karaibo does not think—he is ready to obey."

"That's the talk—though the time may come when I'll want you to put your thinkin'-cap on. Jest you stay around here for awhile, and I'll see to it that you git a hoss, a rifle, and what other traps you want. Don't go away onless the orders come from me. Now we'll go back to the tavern."

Without more words, the strangely-assorted couple walked to the inn. The Malay was occupied with his own thoughts, which were inscrutable. The outlaw was chuckling at having secured a useful and faithful ally, in a country where he was unknown, and where he dared not trust any one with his horse, much less with an important secret.

"Jest you stay around here, yaller-skin," said Adams, when they reached the inn. "I am goin' up into the hills, to try to shoot suthin' that's fit for a white man to eat. Keep a still tongue in your head, and Burt Adams will show you how to make your fortin'."

The mountaineer untied his horse, and rode off toward the timber. Karaibo watched him until he was out of sight, and then entered the inn, where the old Mexican was seated, his attitude and expression indicating extreme

melancholy. Karaibo beckoned to him, and the old man rose and followed his swarthy friend out of the door.

"What did he want?" eagerly asked the Mexican.
"What did he say to you?"

"Much—he told me much. Ah! he is a bad man—bad, *bad*, BAD!"

(Karaibo was again at a loss for adjectives.)

"He make a bargain with Karaibo. Karaibo is to help him to steal, to rob, perhaps to murder—and maybe something worse."

"What do you mean? Is it possible that you can league yourself with such a man, for such unholy purposes?"

"We must sometimes do wrong, so that we may do right—so Cap'n Henry says. This man says that he will be guide for a rich man, a Mexican, and his daughter, who will go from the coast to Santa Fé. They will have money, and he will lead them among the Indians, where they will be robbed."

"Is that all? When he has robbed them, what then?"

"Karaibo does not know. You can guess as well as he. He tells Karaibo that he shall have much money."

"But what has this to do with me? How will it aid my revenge?"

"Karaibo does not know. His eyes are open, and his ears can hear; but he knows little of himself. You must see Cap'n Henry, and must tell him all, for Karaibo has promised to stay with this man, and to do what he says."

"Who is Cap'n Henry, and where shall I find him?"

"Cap'n Henry is *my* Cap'n Henry! Do you know the ranch called Dos Hermanos, near San Pedro?"

"I do."

"There you must go. If Cap'n Henry is not there, wait for him. When he comes, tell him what I have told you; tell him all you know about that man."

"But how will I know him, and how will he know me?"

"You will ask for Cap'n Henry—that is enough—and show him this."

The Malay handed the old man a small cornelian cross.

"Karaiho cannot write, but you have a tongue. Get your gun, and go. Have you any money—*aquel dinero*?"

"Very little."

"Here is money; buy a horse as soon as you can, and ride fast, until you reach the Dos Hermanos."

The old man took the money, settled his bill at the fonda, got his gun from under the haystack, and walked briskly towards the west. The Malay watched him until he was out of sight, and then returned to the inn, where he busied himself in taking care of the sick Englishman, who was very grateful for this unexpected display of kindness and sympathy.

CHAPTER IV

A SQUALLY TIME.

OUR scene changes to a land-locked bay on the coast of Old California. It is a secure and beautiful bay, although seldom used by shipping, with the exception of small craft that occasionally seek, in its placid waters, a refuge from ocean storms. On the northern shore of the bay is a small and scattered hamlet, consisting of an inn, and a few adobe houses and wooden huts, mostly inhabited by fishermen. Near the middle of the bay, and about a mile from either shore, is a small and beautiful island,

embowered in trees, and through the thick foliage glimpses can be caught of the white walls of a low but spacious mansion.

The morning was far spent, when a horseman, well mounted, rode into the hamlet, and drew rein in front of the adobe building that did duty as an inn. He was a fine-looking young man, with bright blue eyes and a heavy brown beard, and was attired in a sort of semi-military costume. As he dismounted, he was greeted by the landlord, as "Captain Henry," from which it may reasonably be inferred that he was the same person who was reading a newspaper at the window in the fonda at the foot of the sierra, while Adams was boasting of his exploits.

"How can I accommodate you, Captain Henry?" asked the obsequious landlord. My house and all I have are at your service."

"I shall not want so much, Pedro," answered the young gentleman. "Something to eat for myself and my horse will be acceptable."

"My humble dinner will soon be ready, Captain Henry, but you can dine now, if it pleases your Excellency."

"I desire you to understand, Pedro, that I am not an Excellency. I will wait for your dinner. What do you think of the weather?"

"Those clouds in the south-east look ugly, señor, and I fear that a storm is brewing in that quarter."

"I hope not, for I must sail over to the island to-day, if I can get a boat."

"To Señor Vincente's?"

"Precisely. Can I hire a boat of you?"

"I have no rowboats, but I have two sailboats, the only boats now on the bay, except those at the island. Juanito has gone to fish with one of my boats, but the

other is moored at my little dock. If you can manage the boat, señor, you are welcome to it."

"I can manage it, Pedro ; never fear for that. I have sailed in rougher weather than you ever feel in this bay. Let us get our dinner as soon as we can, for I have no time to waste."

When the plain Mexican dinner was despatched, Pedro pointed out the boat to his guest, and the young gentleman went down to the wharf. Having satisfied himself that the boat and her rigging were to be depended upon, he proceeded to hoist the sails.

While he was thus engaged, there was another arrival at the inn. The new-comer, a repulsive-looking man, was dressed in hunter's garb, was mounted on a large and strong horse, and carried a long rifle on the pommel of his saddle.

"Hello, stranger !" was his greeting to the landlord. "Can you tell me whar'abouts in these parts lives an old chap, called Don Manuel Vincente ?"

"Yonder," answered Pedro, pointing at the water.

"Yonder ! What do you mean by yonder ? Is he a fish ?"

"The hacienda of Don Manuel is situated upon that beautiful island in the middle of the bay."

"Thunderation ! How am I to git to it ?"

"You must go in a boat. Don Manuel has boats, but they are now at the island."

"Can't you take me over, old hess ? You keep boats, for sartin, and I must git thar' afore night."

"My son has gone to fish with one of my boats, and the other I have just hired to a young gentleman. When the boat returns from the island, I will be at your service."

"Ef thar's a man goin' over to the island, why can't I go with him. I am able and willin' to pay my way, stranger."

"If he would consent to take you, he would not accept your money. It is easy to ask him. He is a gentleman ; if he refuses, it will be with politeness."

"I'll try him on ; thar' can't be any harm done. Now, cap'n, I want to step inside, and git suthin' warmin' fur my innards, 'cause I ain't much used to water, 'specially when it's salt. You must take car' of my hoss and traps, and I'll pay you well fur it when I git back."

When the traveller had satisfied his thirst, the landlord pointed out the boat to him, and he walked, with long strides, to the little wharf, where he found Captain Henry, who had hoisted his mainsail, engaged in coiling the ropes.

"Mornin', stranger," said the backwoodsman, in as pleasant a tone as he could assume.

The young man looked up, and saw, at a glance, that the speaker was Burt Adams. He thought he was not recognized by the outlaw, who had not had a fair opportunity of seeing his face while he was reading his newspaper in the fonda.

"The landlord up at the tavern tells me you are goin' over to the island yonder. I'm wantin' to go over, but thar' ain't no other boat, and I'm in a hurry ; so I thought I'd make bold to ask if you'd be willin' to take me as a passenger."

Captain Henry looked up from his work again, and coolly surveyed the mountaineer. He wondered what object the fellow could have in wishing to go to the island.

"Have you business there? Do you wish to see any one in particular?" he asked.

"Wal, I do. I want to see the old chap himself, Don Manuel Vincente. I'm expected thar', stranger."

The young man looked grave, and meditated while he was pretending to arrange a rope.

"It can be for no good purpose," he thought, "that this fellow wishes to visit the island. However, he says that he is expected, and, if I do not take him, he will find some other means of going. If he goes in my company, I will be able to watch him, and, perhaps, to thwart him, if he intends any villany. I may as well take the risk."

"If you are expected over there," said he, "I am willing to take you. I think it will blow pretty heavy, and I have no objection to some live ballast. Do you know anything about a boat?"

"I can manage a canoe as well as any man, red or white, on the wust rapids; but your salt water is a kind o' grass that this buffler never fed on."

"Very well. You must do just as I tell you; you must obey my orders, and I will engage to carry you over safely."

"In course I will, cap'n. Jest show me the trail, and I'll foller it."

"Come aboard, then, and I'll shove off."

The outlaw had hardly stepped into the boat, when old Pedro, the landlord of the little inn, came hurrying down to the wharf, escorting a young lady, whom he treated with the greatest deference.

"Hold on, Captain Henry," he shouted. "Don't cast off yet. Here is a young lady who wishes to cross to the island, and I am sure that you have not the heart to refuse her."

"Not I, indeed," cheerily answered the young man, as he stood up by the mast.

As he spoke, the young lady raised her veil, exhibiting a countenance of rare beauty. She was a brunette of the true Spanish type, with black eyes and hair, peach-bloom cheeks, rosy lips, long eyelashes, and the form of a—not of a fairy, but of a very beautiful and graceful girl. A warm blush overspread her face as she raised her veil, and a corresponding effect was produced upon the young gentleman in the boat.

“Manuela.”

“Henry! Is it really you?”

“It is, and I shall be happy if I can be of any service to you.”

“I expected that a boat would be here from the island.”

“It came over yesterday, señorita,” interrupted the landlord.

“I supposed so. I am a day behind my time, and am anxious to go home now, as my father will be uneasy. You know, Pedro, that I cannot stay here. Are you really going to the island, Henry? Do you suppose that my father—”

“Let us suppose nothing, carissima. I am a gentleman, as I can easily prove, and it cannot be possible that he is as unreasonable as I have been led to believe. Come aboard, Manuela, for we have no time to lose.”

“I fear, Captain Henry, that the storm will strike you before you can cross,” said the landlord. “Are you not afraid, señorita?”

“I am not afraid now. Besides, Pedro, I cannot stay here. Henry, I am ready.”

With the assistance of the young gentleman, Manuela Vincente was safely deposited in the little sloop and seated in the stern-sheets, where she regarded with a look of disgust the repulsive features of Burt Adams, who sat

opposite to her. Captain Henry, as we have thus far heard the young man called, hoisted the jib, cast off the bowline, and sprung to the helm, where Manuela was seated at his left.

The little craft, obedient to his touch, darted off instantly, and, with the south-east breeze nearly abeam, sped swiftly over the waves toward the island. Captain Henry was in fine spirits; the boat was easily managed with the wind free, and he was at liberty to bestow most of his attention upon his fair companion, which he did not hesitate to do, while the outlaw, sullen and moody, appeared to notice neither of them.

Soon the young man's attention was attracted by the shaking of the jib and the shivering of the main-sail. He looked up, and cast his eyes to windward, with an expression of surprise, if not of dismay.

"By Jove!" he exclaimed, "Manuela mia, I should have kept better watch, but your bright eyes lured me from my duty. The wind has hauled around to the southward, and I have let the craft go off her course. It will be hard work, now, to make the island, and I am afraid we shall have a hard squall pretty soon. Yes, it is coming now. Look, Manuela; how black the water is, where the storm-spirit treads."

"I know it well. Had you not better take in a reef?"

"I think not. I want to carry as much sail as possible, so that I can make the island without tacking. Where is your father's dock, Manuela?"

"At the western end of the island."

"I am glad of that; if we can weather the point, we will make a landing in smooth water. Say, you man in the hunting-shirt, you must bear a hand now. Are you ready to do as I tell you?"

"Ya-as; but I don't want to be ordered about like a nigger."

"You promised to obey my orders, and you must do it. Can you swim?"

"Swim? Not I."

"You had better do as I bid you, then. For my part, I can swim like a fish, and will not allow this lady to be drowned."

"What shall I do, cap'n?" growled Adams.

"Take this rope, and hold it firmly. When I tell you to let fly, you must loose it right away."

The young man handed him the bight of the jib-sheet, and looked up to windward. It was none too soon, for the squall was on them. It came like a thunder-clap, "all of a heap," knocking down the little vessel so that the water poured in over her gunwale. The outlaw's face turned yellow, and Manuela shut her eyes.

"Let fly," shouted Henry, as he put down his helm.

Burt Adams obeyed, the jib flapped loosely abroad, and the little sloop rounded up into the wind, where she stood for a moment, trembling like a horse that has taken a desperate leap.

"Haul in that rope," said Henry, as he put his helm apart.

Adams again obeyed, and again the boat, close-hauled, sped swiftly towards the island.

"We are well through with that, Manuela," said the helmsman; "but here comes another knock-down, and I must carry as much sail as possible, to make the island."

The words were hardly out of his mouth, when the squall came. Again the little craft bent over to it, again the jib was let fly, and again she was relieved from the

pressure of the wind. But this squall lasted longer than the other, and it was necessary to bear away, before the boat should lose her steerage.

"Haul in that rope," shouted the helmsman.

"I won't do it," answered Adams, who had seen the benefit of loosing the jib, in setting the boat on her legs.

"Haul in that rope, if you don't want us upset."

"I'll see you — first."

It was no time for temporizing, and Henry could not leave his helm. Shoving the tiller apart, he drew a pistol, cocked it, and pointed it at the head of the obstinate mountaineer.

"Haul in that rope, or I send a bullet through your brain."

The determined look of the young man told Adams that he was in earnest, and he hastily did as he was required. The jib filled, the squall soon passed off, and Henry, without further trouble, soon brought his boat alongside of the little dock at the island. All were pretty well wetted, and the hull was a third full of water, but no other damage was done.

CHAPTER V.

DISAPPOINTMENT.

As soon as Captain Henry had made the boat fast to the dock, he assisted Manuela to land, and did not forget to kiss her hand while he held it.

"Where is that ugly man?" asked the young lady.

"He has slipped away like a cat," said Henry, as he looked around, and saw nothing of the outlaw. "We are well rid of him, Manuela. I do not like his looks, and hope he's not on the island for any evil purpose."

"I hope so, for I like him no more than you do. Ah, here is my father."

Don Manuel Vincente had seen the boat when it left the mainland, and had watched it with his glass. He soon perceived that his daughter was in it, and his interest increased as he observed the threatening appearance of the weather. When the boat was caught in the squalls, he knew that it was a perilous situation, and he trembled for the safety of his dear and only child. When the little tempest was weathered, and the boat shot ahead into smooth water and the shelter of the island, he hastened down to the dock, followed by two of his servants, arriving there just as Manuela had been assisted to land.

Don Manuel was a withered, parchment-skinned, stiff-backed specimen of a Mexican *hidalgo*, who boasted the *sangre azul* of Old Spain, and was even more proud of that than of his great wealth and his fair daughter. His pride amounted to haughtiness, and his dignity to a stately reserve, but yet he could be very polite and gentlemanly.

"My daughter!" he exclaimed in Spanish, as he folded Manuela in his arms. "I feared that you would be lost in that last squall. Why did you not arrive yesterday? How does it happen that you have come with a stranger!"

"This gentleman," answered Manuela, "was coming to the island, and he kindly consented to take me as a passenger. I assure you, father, he proved himself an excellent boatman."

Don Manuel bowed stiffly to the young gentleman, who replied with a military salute.

"I suppose, sir," said the Mexican, "that I will have the pleasure of seeing you at my hacienda."

"Permit me to advise you, Señor Vicente, to take your daughter to the house, as she has been wet by the spray. I will do myself the honour to follow you, as soon as I have taken care of my boat."

Don Manuel again bowed stiffly, with a feeling of indignation rather than gratitude, toward the man who had suffered *his* daughter to be wet by the spray, and solemnly led Manuela to the house.

Captain Henry lowered the sails of the little sloop, made everything fast and snug, and then walked up the gravelled road that led to the mansion, with a serious face, and a strange commotion about the heart. He was met on the verandah by a negro servant, who invited him to enter, and showed him into a library, richly and tastefully furnished, in which Don Manuel was seated.

The old Mexican rose to receive his guest, and commenced a high-flown speech, expressive of nothing except his own dignity, which was interrupted by the entrance of Manuela, who came tripping into the room, and blushed at the sight of the young gentleman.

"You have done a service to my daughter and myself, sir," continued the *hidalgo*; "though you must confess that it was hardly safe to attempt to cross the bay when the weather was so threatening."

"The ebb tide would soon have made, señor, and I could not have reached the island to-day."

"Very well; we will let that pass. You have done me a service, I repeat, and I am always willing to reward—"

"Pardon me, Señor Vicente; there is no reward due to me. Permit me to offer you this letter, which will tell you who I am."

Don Manuel took the letter that was handed to him, and frowned as he examined the superscription. When

he had opened and read it, his frown became darker, and he rose from his seat with such a haughty, indignant, and at the same time contemptuous air, that it provoked the young man to return the almost insolent stare.

"I presume," said he, "that you are the person who is mentioned in this letter, under the name of Captain Henry Taylor."

"I am."

"It is my duty to inform you that you have brought a very poor recommendation; in fact, it could hardly be worse. The person whose name is signed to this letter, this Antonia Riaz, is a fellow with whom I would condescend to hold no communication."

"I thought, señor, that he was your avocado, and the agent for your California property."

"He was, but I discovered his rascally character, and have sent him his dismissal."

"I have never heard a syllable against his character. He is highly respected in San Francisco, and moves in the best society."

"I have no doubt that he is admitted to such society as *you* frequent."

"Señor, you insult me without cause. If I had known that Antonia Riaz had fallen under your displeasure, I could have brought you letters from the most prominent merchants and bankers of San Francisco, who would have certified to my character, my family, and my fortune."

"It would have been of no avail, for I would not believe a word that any of *los malditos Yankis* might say. What do I care about your family or your fortune? Your family can be nothing but a Yankee family, and your fortune, if you have any, has doubtless been filched from the rightful owners of the soil. As for your character,

I know enough of that. A man who would attempt to ensnare the affections of my daughter—an heiress—in the absence of her parent and protector, clandestinely and insidiously, as you have done, has no character that a Mexican gentleman can respect.”

“ But, señor—”

“ Father,” interrupted Manuela, “ he has never—”

“ Silence, child! Go to your room, Manuela, and remain there until I send for you.”

Manuela covered her face with her hands, and left the library.

“ I admit, señor,” said Taylor, “ that I love your daughter. It would be impossible for one to look upon her without loving her.”

“ I wish to hear no more. If you have any hopes in regard to my daughter, you had better dismiss them from your thoughts. That is enough. Sooner than see her married to a Yankee, I would see her in her grave. You know the way to the dock, where you will find your boat. You came here unasked, and I trust you will not need a more direct invitation to leave.”

“ Allow me one word, señor, and I will go. There crossed with me, in the boat, a man named Burt Adams, a mountaineer, who said that he was expected here, but he disappeared when he landed. I am afraid he is here for an evil purpose, and I wish to warn you against him, as I have good reason to believe him to be a dangerous desperado, a robber, and a murderer.”

“ I have not asked your warning, and shall not accept it,” answered Don Manuel, smiling contemptuously. “ When Manuel Vincente is not able to protect himself and his household, he may ask aid from a Yankee—but not until then. I doubt whether there is any more dan-

gerous character than yourself on the island. I hope that I have not been unnecessarily severe with you, young man; but I have thought it proper to speak plainly, so that you may entertain no unfounded expectations. Lopé, show this—person—the door.”

Without another word, Henry Taylor left the house, and walked quickly down the road towards the dock, scattering the gravel with his feet, like a man in a passion. His anger soon found vent in muttered words:—

“The miserable, haughty, insolent, dried-up old humbug! That he should think of questioning the character and respectability of an American citizen, who is worth a dozen such mummies of Dons! How I would have liked to knock him down! I believe I would have pulled his nasty old moustache, if I had not thought of Manuela. His insolence was fully as much as I could bear. Well, there is no help for it now, and I must keep a stiff upper lip, for faint heart never won fair lady, and Manuela is beautiful enough to die for. I must learn from Pedro when they intend to start for Santa Fé, and perhaps I may hit upon some plan that will help me. Fortune favours the brave, they tell us, and I will not fail to be bold enough.”

Thus musing, he reached the dock. He soon hoisted the sails, and shoved off his boat. As he did so, he saw Burt Adams standing on the beach, and looking at him with a self-satisfied sneer on his ugly features. Henry thought that he would like to send a bullet through the black heart of the outlaw, but was too prudent to give effect to his wish.

The sky was again clear, and there was a pleasant breeze from the south, before which the little sloop glided swiftly over the smooth water, and soon reached the

northern shore, where he was greeted by Pedro, who assisted Henry in taking care of the boat, and rallied him upon his dejected appearance.

"I did not expect you to return so soon, Captain Henry," said he, "and you look as if you were trying to chew a prickly pear. I am afraid you did not meet with a very gracious reception from crusty old Don Manuel."

"Confound the sun-dried old wretch ! It gives me unchristian feelings to think of him. Never mind him now, Pedro ; I may tell you more some other time. At present I want my supper."

Supper was soon ready, and was duly discussed by the garrulous landlord and his uncommunicative guest. When it was finished, Henry smoked a meditative cigar in front of the inn, where he was joined by Pedro.

"Don Manuel is a very cross-grained old man," suggested the landlord.

"Rather so."

"But his daughter, the Señorita Manuela, is most beautiful."

"As beautiful as an artist's dream, and with a warmth and life that the dream could never know !"

"Have you not thought so for some time, Captain Henry ?"

"Ever since I first saw her. That reminds me, Pedro, that I wish as early a breakfast as I can get, and wish my horse to be ready, for I must start by sunrise, if possible. If you will give me a light now, I will go to bed."

"He don't want to talk," mused Pedro, when left alone. "If he has been ill-treated by Señor Vincente, the old Don is to blame ; for, if there ever was a gentleman, Captain Henry is one. It is very plain that he loves the

Señorita Manuela, and if she does not love him, my old eyes have deceived me. For my part, I wish them both well."

It was but a little after sunrise when Henry Taylor mounted his horse, bid the landlord good-bye, and started on his journey. After riding about twenty miles, which brought him within the jurisdiction of the United States, he stopped at an old and dilapidated farm-house, from over the door of which projected a dingy sign, whereon were painted an undistinguishable picture and the words "*Los Dos Hermanos*." The ranch, including an extensive farm, had once been the property of two brothers, from whom it had derived its name, and had been purchased, on their decease, by the father of Henry Taylor, who has been mentioned in these pages as "Captain Henry." As he had no present use for the property, it had mostly lain idle, and an old Mexican and his wife had been permitted to occupy the old house, who eked out a scanty living by keeping an inn, at which a traveller would sometimes stop.

The young gentleman was warmly and enthusiastically greeted by the old couple, as he alighted from his horse, and entered the weather-beaten building.

"We have been anxiously expecting you, señor capitano," said the man. "There is a gentleman here, a Mexican, who has been waiting for you."

"A Mexican waiting for me? Where is he?"

"He is here, señor."

The old Mexican who then rose from a seat, and advanced towards Henry, was the same who had listened to Burt Adams' bloodthirsty boasting in the fonda at the base of the sierra, but the young gentleman did not recognise him.

"You do not know me, señor ; yet we have met before. Perhaps this may serve as an introduction."

The old man produced a cornelian cross, which Henry took from his hand.

"It is right. You came from Karaibo. Where is he ? What news do you bring ?"

"If I can speak with you privately, I will tell you."

The old couple took the hint, and vacated the room, when the Mexican related all that he knew concerning Burt Adams, including the account he had received from the Malay, of his intention to play the traitor towards a party that he was to guide from the coast to Santa Fé.

"This is really important," said Taylor, "and I am glad that you have brought me the news. What is your name, my friend ?"

"Miguel Martinez, *a su servicio*."

"You must remain here, Señor Martinez, until I return. I trust that I will soon see you. I have now a real inducement to track that scoundrel, and you may rely upon it that I will do my best to right your wrongs, as well as to defend the interests of others. Here, Jorge. Come here, amigo !"

"Don't unsaddle my horse," said he, as the old landlord entered ; "but give him some water, for I must ride back to the coast immediately."

"You surely will not go, señor capitano, until you have eaten something, and have refreshed your horse ?"

"You must give it to me right away, then, for I have no time to lose."

A hasty dinner was soon despatched, and the young gentleman rode back to the little hamlet on the land-locked bay as fast as his horse could carry him. That night he wrote a letter, which he addressed to Don Manuel

Vincente, and sent it to the island the next morning, by the landlord's boy, Juanito.

He waited impatiently for an answer, but did not receive it until noon. He hastily tore open the envelope, and found his own letter enclosed, with a note from Don Manuel, which read as follows.

“ Sir—If I had known that the enclosed letter was from you, I should have returned it unopened. I write to request that you will meddle no more with what does not concern you. If you were a gentleman, the request would not have been necessary. Adams, the person of whom you speak, comes to me well recommended, and has my confidence ; therefore, it is useless for you to slander him. I may mention, also, that he has anticipated you, for he has shown me that your character is such as I had suspected it to be. He tells me that he saw you at a fandango, in the lowest company, and that you were kicked out of the house for impertinence to a Mexican girl. I have no hesitation in believing him, and advise you to get a character for yourself, before you malign that of another.

“ Hoping that I may not again be annoyed by you,

“ I remain,

“ MANUEL VINCENTE.”

“ The blind and obstinate old fool !” exclaimed Taylor. “ I was never at a fandango in my life ; but he would believe the word of that double-dyed villain, in preference to mine. I would not lift a finger, if the rascals should carry him off with all his money ; but they shall not harm Manuela while I live.”

CHAPTER VI.

DON MANUEL UNDERTAKES A JOURNEY.

ABOUT a week after Henry Taylor's visit to Don Manuel's hacienda, a train left the town of San Pedro, bending its course towards the mountains.

In the train were two covered waggons, one of which conveyed, in as luxurious a manner as that mode of locomotion would allow, Don Manuel Vincente, and in the other rode his daughter Manuela, and her maid Julia, a pretty mulatto girl. Another waggon was filled with stores for the journey, and several pack-mules were similarly loaded. The train was escorted by half a dozen Mexicans on horseback, armed with escopetas and old muskets, and with large and clumsy sabres dangling from their hips. All were guided and led by the outlaw, Burt Adams, who rode at the head of the column, with his rifle resting, as usual, on the pommel of his saddle, and with a self-satisfied, triumphant expression on his ugly countenance.

The three portions of the train that were of the greatest value in the eyes of Don Manuel were—firstly, himself; second, his daughter; and thirdly, his treasure. The last was comprised of gold and silver, and was kept in a strong box in his own waggon, that waggon being the special object of the surveillance of the *fierce-looking* Mexican escort. The treasure was considerable, as the Don owned an unworked silver mine in New Mexico, which he intended to develop, and was carrying money for that purpose. As he had relatives living near Santa Fé, he expected to combine pleasure with business by visiting them. As for his daughter, she was simply making a visit, though Don Manuel had some “under-

ground" thoughts about leaving her in the care of a maiden aunt, or placing her at school in a convent, either of which plans would have made Manuela feel quite rebellious, if she had known of them.

The route, which lay across the Colorado, and over several ranges of mountains, was by no means free from danger at that time, although the transfer of the territory to the United States, and the gold excitement, had induced a large immigration into and through that country. The Indians were occasionally troublesome, willing enough to attack small parties, and gangs of lawless brigands sometimes hung about the waggon-roads, lying in wait for plunder. But Don Manuel had no fear, as he relied on the valour of his moustachioed Mexicans, not believing the absurd tales that were told of their having been so abominably whipped by *los malditos Yankis*.

It was concerning the possibility of danger that Manuela and her maid, snugly seated in their waggon, were conversing, as the heavy conveyance slowly rumbled over the rough road.

"I hope we shall get through safely, Julia," said the young lady; "but I must confess that I do not like the appearance of our guide."

"He is a horrid ugly man, señorita, and I am afraid of him. He looks at me sometimes as if he would eat me up."

"I hope he will not be such a cannibal, for I would miss you greatly. I must admit that I also am afraid of him, and I wonder why my father employed him. I know that Captain Henry warned him against the man, but he would have nothing to do with Captain Henry, and paid no heed to the warning."

"Do you mean that handsome American whom you saw at San Diego, and with whom you danced at the widow Zangre's ball?"

"That is the man," answered Manuela, with a blush.

"Ah, señorita! that was a man, indeed! How beautiful the blue eyes of the North seem to me! Do you love him very much?"

"You should not ask me such questions, Julia," said the young lady, blushing again. "If I did love him, I should try to forget it, for my father hates him."

"Why should he hate him—such a brave, noble, and handsome young gentleman?"

"Because he is a Yankee, and because he was in the Yankee army that conquered Mexico. This ugly guide of ours has told him some bad tales about Captain Henry, but I do not believe a word of them, and I do not think my father does, although he pretends to."

"I would like to tear that guide's eyes out!"

"Then we should have no one to show us the way. Let us pray that he will lead us safely to Santa Fé. Hand me my embroidery frame, Julia. Time passes so slowly in this tedious travelling."

Time continued to pass slowly, during their toilsome and monotonous journey over hills and plains. Don Manuel occupied himself with eating, drinking, smoking, and reading Spanish books, when he was not sleeping; Manuela worked at her embroidery, gossiped with her maid, or occasionally rode upon her own saddle-horse, that accompanied the train.

After several such dull days, Burt Adams ordered the noon-day halt at the inn near the foot of the sierra, where we first made his acquaintance. As Don Manuel had his own cook and his own provisions, he did not condescend

to patronize any of the places of entertainment that were met with on the route. The outlaw, however, gladly availed himself of the opportunity to enter the fonda, and drank several glasses of the fiery liquor which he had tasted there on a previous occasion.

When he had poured down his poison, he looked around the room, and perceived Karaibo seated in a corner. The Malay was silent and moody as ever, but was dressed like a civilized being, and was covered with a large Mexican blanket, with a hole in the centre, through which his head was thrust. His wicked-looking creese was concealed, but he still retained his outlandish turban.

Burt Adams approached him, and spoke to him in a low voice.

"Is all right, yaller-skin? Are you ready?"

"All is right. Karaibo is ready."

"Glad to see that you've fixed yourself suthin' like a white man. Have you had your grub?"

"Karaibo is not hungry."

"Come along, then, and I'll show you to the old chap. Put on your best looks, yaller-boy, and be mighty respectful, for he's prouder than an Injun with a new red blanket and a jug of rum."

The outlaw led his ally to the waggon in which sat Don Manuel, smoking, and watching his servant, with the help of Julia, prepare the noontide meal. Manuela stood by the waggon, gazing with interest at the snow-topped sierra.

"This is the chap I spoke to you about, señor," said Burt. "He's a sort of a furrener, but he allows that he's a Christian, and I reckon he'll be useful to us in case of a scrimmage."

Karaibo made a low salaam, and, as he raised his dark

eyes, they rested admiringly on the beautiful face of Manuela, who was regarding him with curiosity.

"If you are satisfied, Adams, I have no objection," said the Don, "though I hardly think we need another man. The brigands will not be so bold as to venture to attack *me*."

"Injuns don't care much for grandees."

"Very well. The matter is settled. Are you willing go with us, *hombre*?"

"Karaibo is willing. He will defend you with his life," answered the Malay, still looking at Manuela.

"It is sufficient. You may go, Adams. Lopé, is my dinner ready?"

Thus the bargain for the services of Karaibo was made, the question of pay being left to the guide—a bargain that was to have more influence upon the destinies of the contracting parties than either of them at that time suspected.

In the course of an hour the train was again in motion. Don Manuel smoked his cigar, preparatory to his usual siesta, and his daughter conversed with her maid concerning the late addition to their company.

"It seems that we are to have another gallows-bird to lead us to perdition, *señorita*."

"You would not say so, Julia, if you had noticed his eyes. They seemed to me to be soft, gentle, and honest eyes. If that man is a rogue, I am greatly mistaken, for more beautiful eyes than his were never seen."

"Are they finer than those of Captain Henry?"

"No comparison can be made between them, for Captain Henry's eyes are blue, while these are black as a coal. But we should not talk of such vanities, Julia. Hand me my breviary."

Manuela opened the book, and began to read a prayer, but she soon fell asleep, with her head on a convenient cushion.

It was late in the afternoon when the train reached the head of the pass through which the road led across the sierra, and it was considered best not to attempt the passage until morning, but to camp on a level plateau, near which was a spring of pure water.

The mules were hardly unhitched from the waggons, when the travellers received another accession, in the person of a venerable priest, who came ambling to the southward, on a mouse-coloured mule.

The reverend gentleman was attired in a long brown serge gown, fastened at the waist by a belt. His head was covered by a queer-shaped, broad-brimmed hat, of the "shovel" style, underneath which peeped out a few straggling locks of grey hair. A blanket and a pack, strapped behind the saddle, showed that he was prepared for a journey. A cross hung from a string of beads around his neck, and a rifle, strangely in contrast with his peaceful profession, lay before him on the saddle-bow.

Apparently perceiving that Don Manuel, who was walking and smoking near his waggon, was the most important personage in the party, the priest approached him, spread out his hands, and muttered some unintelligible words, as if invoking a blessing, while the Mexican guards hastened towards him, to obtain a share of the grace that he was supposed to bestow.

Don Manuel, who was a most devout Catholic, reverently saluted the priest, and assisted him to dismount.

"You are welcome, holy father," said he. "Whence do you come, and whither do you wish to go?"

"I am the humble frater Roqué, of the Mission San

Gabriel. Have I the honour of addressing el *illustrissimo* señor, Don Manuel Vincente?"

"I am Señor Vincente, padre!"

"Praises, then, to the Virgin of San Roqué, my blessed patroness, who has permitted me to overtake your Excellency. I had learned that you were about to undertake a journey to Santa Fé, with a suitable escort, and I hoped to join you some days ago, but was unable to do so. I have now the honour to request that I may be permitted to place myself under your protection, as my route is the same as yours."

Burt Adams, who had observed the arrival of the priest, came up, and heard his explanation.

"Whar' mought the priest be wantin' to go to, señor?" he asked.

"I desire to visit a tribe of Indians, some distance to the eastward," answered Padre Roqué, "in order to negotiate for the release of a servitor of our mission, who is held as a prisoner by them."

"Goin' among the Apaches?"

"No, señor."

"The Pai Utés?"

"No, señor; it is a Mohave tribe."

"They're tofable peaceable Injuns, and I don't know what they should be doin' with your man. It looks rayther strange fur a priest to be carryin' a rifle."

"The rifle is intended as a present to the chief of the tribe, and I have trinkets for the women in my pack."

"Ain't you anyways afraid to go among the savage Injuns?"

"I have no thought of fear when I am performing my duty. The Indians generally respect the priestly garb, but brigands do not, and it is for protection against men

who call themselves civilised, that I have sought the safeguard of Señor Vincente."

"It is sufficient," said Don Manuel. "It is useless to question the holy father, Adams. He is a man of peace, on a mission of peace, and it is my duty, no less than my desire, as a loving son of the true Church, to aid him as far as I am able. I request you to sup with me, padre, and henceforth to consider yourself as one of my train."

The priest consented thankfully, and dismounted from his mule, which was taken in charge by one of the Mexican escort, while Burt Adams, grumbling and muttering, busied himself in arranging the camp for the night, assisted by Karaibo and the Mexicans.

CHAPTER VII.

A CROSS, AND SOMETHING MORE.

THE next morning the train passed through the defile, and moved down into the wooded valley of the Mojave (Mohave), a pretty little stream of fresh water. The roads were good for the season, being mostly dry and gravelly. The day was pleasant, and the cover of Manuela's waggon was drawn up, so that she might enjoy the air and sunshine.

The Malay, who was well mounted, and who carried a gun in a cover, now and then rode up to the side of the waggon, and was kindly greeted by the young lady. He answered her questions very respectfully, and with a voice of such gentleness and sweetness, that Manuela declared that he could not possibly mean any harm, and her maid was compelled to admit that she did not believe him to be a "gallows-bird."

"How much nicer he is than that ugly guide!" said Julia. "I think he is good; but why is he with that wicked-looking man, señorita, if they are not *camerados*? What beautiful black eyes he has! and what a pity it is that his skin is so dark!"

"Is it darker than yours?"

"N-n-o—but—"

"There he goes, Julia. How well he rides."

Karaibo did ride well, and he often dashed into the table-land, or among the hills, and always kept an eye towards the north, as if looking for some one.

Manuela had another visitor that morning. Padre Roqué, mounted on his sleek and well-conditioned mule, rode up to the waggon, and was saluted with due reverence by mistress and maid. His venerable appearance, his kindly but melancholy countenance, and his fatherly tone, caused them to love, as well as to respect him, and they agreed that the companionship of such a nice old gentleman would make their tedious journey more endurable.

The padre did not remain long with them, as he was called away by Don Manuel, who was glad to have met some one with whom he could converse, and some one who evinced a proper appreciation of the dignity of him, Don Manuel Vincente.

Shortly after he had left their waggon, Julia picked up a small cornelian cross, that was lying on a cushion. She examined it with curiosity, and handed it to her mistress.

"Here is a cross, señorita, which you have dropped, I suppose. I do not remember having seen it before, and did not know that you had such a cross."

"It is not mine," said Manuela, blushing, as she took the cross; "but I think I have seen it before."

"I noticed some letters that were engraved on the

stone, señorita, and they were not the initials of your name."

"They are Captain Henry's initials, Julia."

"Indeed. Is it he, then, who gave you the cross?"

"It is not mine. He has never given me anything—"

"Except his heart, señorita."

"You should not speak to me in that way, Julia. It is Captain Henry's cross, and the wonder is, how it happens to be here."

"Perhaps the padre dropped it."

"How could the padre have Captain Henry's cross? Besides the padre was not in the waggon, but was riding his mule."

A bright idea struck the maid, and she put her finger on her lip, with a very mysterious air.

"Suppose, señorita," said she, "that this padre should be Captain Henry himself. You know that men can disguise themselves so perfectly, that they will not be known by their nearest friends."

"You are talking nonsense, Julia. How could blue eyes be changed to black eyes?"

"That is more than I can tell you, señorita, but I have heard you read of stranger things in romances."

"Romances do not tell the truth, you foolish child. Nothing of the kind is known in real life, and this tiresome travelling of ours is nothing like a romance. Do you suppose, Julia, that I would not recognise Captain Henry, whatever disguise he might assume?"

"I do not know, señorita, but I wonder how the cross came here."

"Ah, Julia, that is a problem that I am unable to solve. We know that there is a protecting Providence, but we do not always know what way it works for our

good. This cross, which has appeared so mysteriously, may be a sign from above."

Thus the matter dropped, but Manuela attached the cross to a chain, and concealed it within her bosom.

The Malay still kept dashing off to the left of the trail, and still kept an eye to the northward, as if expecting some one, but nothing new occurred until the noon halt, which was made on a little prairie, covered with bunch-grass, just where the trail left the wooded valley of the river.

The mules were unhitched, and left to graze with the horses, and preparations were made for dinner, when a party was seen approaching from the north. Burt Adams rode out to reconnoitre, leaving Karaibo in charge of the camp.

Holding his rifle ready for action, the outlaw moved warily, as if he expected to meet enemies. When the party came within hailing distance, he stopped, and levelled his rifle at the first. The strangers made signs of friendship, and he permitted them to approach. They boldly rode up to where he was stationed, and halted, on reaching him, for further explanations.

The party consisted of three horsemen, the leader being a fine-looking young man, in the rich and showy dress of a Mexican caballero. Under a fine serape, he wore a blue jacket, faced with scarlet, and ornamented with gold-lace, and his flowing pantaloons, slashed nearly up to the knee, were tied with knots of ribbon. His head was covered by a broad slouch hat, trimmed with a black feather. His hair, in black and glossy masses, fell nearly to his shoulders, and his beard and moustache were also black, a colour with which the bright blue of his eyes strangely contrasted. The equipments of his horse, a beautiful

alazan, were highly ornamented, his stirrups were of wood, after the Mexican pattern, and the long rowels of his spurs were heavily gilded. His arms were a rifle, pistols, and a hunting-knife. In short, he was a fine specimen of a Mexican cavalier, and he sat his horse as if he and the animal were one person.

Just behind him rode a man, apparently middle-aged, with grizzled hair and beard, and with rigid, almost expressionless features. He wore a faded blue jacket, which had evidently passed through the hands of a United States quartermaster, and a foraging-cap. There was nothing else about him that was especially noticeable, except that he rode like a dragoon, held his head erect, and generally kept his eyes fixed on the cavalier who preceded him.

The third person was a half-breed Indian youth, with long, straggling, black hair, wild eyes, and a queer mixture of apparel, who led a pack-mule.

"Who are you, strangers, and what do you want yerabouts?" asked the outlaw, still holding his rifle ready for action.

"I am a Mexican gentleman," answered the foremost of the party, "and these are my attendants. I saw your train, as it came up from the valley, and concluded that you were white men and friends. I rode on to meet you, as it is pleasant to meet company when one is travelling in this uninhabited region."

"You speak tol'able good English fur a Mexicaner. Whar' mought you be travellin' to, stranger!"

"I am on my way to Albuquerque."

"Just on our trail," muttered Burt. "I wonder how many more cussed outsiders are goin' to happen around. Reckon I'd best scare this 'un off if I can."

"Are you the proprietor of that train?" asked the cavalier.

"Wal, not adzackly, though I'm in charge of it. The fact is, stranger, that the owner is a mighty stiff and high-steppin' old chap, who don't like to be intruded onto. He gave me partic'ler orders not to let anybody, white, red, or black, come nigh his train, under any pretence whatsoever."

"Is he an American?"

"He's just one of the biggest kind of Dons, stranger, and a mighty proud old chap, as I said afore."

"If he is a Mexican, he will surely be glad to meet a countryman. What is his name?"

"Don Manuel Vincente."

"Of the Ysla Ysleta? I have heard of him, and I think that I am known to him by my family name, if not by my own reputation. I am sure that he will be glad to see me, for he must find the monotony of this journey insufferably tiresome. Lead on to the camp, senior, and we will follow. Come, Juan and Pedrocito; we are among friends at last."

"Not so fast, stranger," growled the outlaw, placing his horse across the path of the other, and frowning ominously. "I've tried to give you as easy a hint as I could, that you're not wanted thar'abouts, and you ort to be satisfied, if you are really a gentleman. As you don't seem to take the hint, I shall have to give you warnin', in plain terms, to turn about, and go your own way."

"Do you mean to insinuate that I am not a gentleman?"

"I don't mean to insineywate nothin', but I mean to tell you to take yourself off with your party."

The cavalier's face flushed, and he grasped his rifle.

The man in the military jacket quietly and methodically ranged himself alongside of his leader, in readiness for action.

It seemed probable that the dispute would terminate in the shedding of blood, but such an issue was averted by the appearance of Don Manuel himself. He had seen the approach of the party and their reception by the guide. Judging from the dress and bearing of the cavalier, that he was a Mexican, and one of consideration, he thought it would be proper to invite him to share the hospitalities of the camp, a movement that Burt Adams had supposed to be entirely beneath the dignity of the "high stepping" Don.

Accordingly, he mounted a horse, and rode forth, accompanied by two of his Mexican guards. As he approached the parties, he perceived that there was a dispute between them, which was about to assume a belligerent character, and he quickened his speed, until he arrived at the scene of the possible conflict.

"What is the matter, Adams?" he asked. "You look and act as if you had met with enemies."

"Not adzackly enemies, as I knows on," grunted the outlaw, "though thar's no tellin' who's who, or what's what, on such a trail as this. The fact is, Don Manuel, that these here strangers wanted to come into our camp, and take up thar' lodgin' with us, like the ground-owl with the prairie-dog, and I was just tellin' 'em as how I allowed you wanted to be let alone, and warn't fond of bein' obtruded onto."

"Your guide, as I presume I may call him," said the cavalier, with a polite bow, and without noticing Adams' disrespectful comparison, "has probably committed a slight error, though I doubt not that his intentions were of the

best. I could not believe that Don Manuel Vincente, in whose veins flows the pure *sangre azul* of old Castile, would refuse the hospitalities of his encampment to one who is a compatriot and a gentleman."

"You were right, sir," answered Don Manuel, "and my guide has certainly exceeded his authority. From my camp I observed your approach, and was convinced that you were not only a friend, but a gentleman whom I would have pleasure in meeting. May I ask who it is that I have the honour to address?"

"The name of my family, if not my own, is probably known to Señor Vincente. I am called Don Luis Arroyes y Ruiz."

"Of the ancient family Arroyes y Ruiz?"

"The same—of Durango."

"It is a name that is honoured in the annals of Mexico, and I am both proud and happy to meet you, Don Luis, and to welcome you to the poor comforts of my humble encampment."

The "compatriots" embraced, as well as that operation could be performed on horseback, while Burt Adams, silent and scowling, regarded them both with looks of hatred and distrust.

"These are your attendants, I presume," continued Don Manuel. "One of them looks as if he might be a Yankee soldier."

"I must confess, señor, that he has been a dragoon in the Yankee army, but he was not one of those *malditos* volunteers. He is a very faithful fellow, and is entirely devoted to me. The other is a harmless half-breed boy, whom I picked up on the plains, in a starving condition. He loves me, señor, if that is any recommendation for him, and he is sharp and willing enough to serve me well."

"I am glad that you are so well attended, Don Luis. In what direction are you now travelling?"

"I propose to go to Albuquerque, and thence, probably, to reach Mexico by the line of the Rio Grande."

"Your route is the same as mine, then, for a long distance, and I trust that I may have your company so long as we travel together."

"Nothing could be more pleasant to me, senor, and I was wishing to suggest such an arrangement to yourself, as your guide, from a hint that he let drop, gave me to understand that our routes were the same."

"Perhaps it may not seem so pleasant to you, Don Luis, when I inform you that I am encumbered with my daughter, on this journey."

"And is that an incumbrance, Senor Vincente? I have often heard the beautiful Manuela spoken of in the highest terms of adulation, and I shall be only too happy to make her acquaintance."

"Let us, then proceed to the camp. You may lead the way, Adams. Don Luis, will you have the kindness to ride with me?"

"It will be my pleasure, senor. Juan Stump, follow in due order. Pedrocito, drive up the mule."

Thus they rode slowly to the encampment, the outlaw silent and scowling as before, and Don Manuel and Don Luis conversing in a lively and amicable manner.

CHAPTER VIII.

A LONG HALT.

THE arrival and reception of Don Luis at the encampment caused Don Manuel to prolong his noon halt considerably beyond the time usually allowed for rest and

refreshment, against which dilatory conduct his guide earnestly but vainly expostulated. Don Manuel was profusely hospitable to his own countrymen, and never enjoyed himself more fully than when acting the part of host at his elegant hacienda on the Ysla Ysleta. On this occasion, he felt that the dignity of the house of Vincente required that he should pay extraordinary attention to the scion of the ancient family of Arroyes y Ruiz, of the proud city of Durango, whom he had so unexpectedly met in the wilderness. He considered it proper, therefore, that his lack of home luxuries and appliances should be compensated for, as far as possible, by his own urbanity and politeness.

The lengthy and grandiloquent interchanges of courtesies that ensued, upon the arrival of the two hidalgos at the camp, were exceedingly annoying to Burt Adams, who waited until his patience was exhausted.

"Tell you what it is, Don Manuel," said he, interrupting the flow of compliments, "you're overstayin' your time in this here camp. The sun is droppin' down to the westward, and we ort to be movin' on."

"But I have encountered a friend, Adams—a Mexican gentleman of birth and renown—and I must entertain him in a style befitting his rank and my own."

"Better cut it short, then, senor, and do your entertainin' as you go along, 'cause these long halts are apt to be dangerous."

"Cut it short, indeed! Do you know what you are talking about? Is that the manner in which I should treat the nephew of his Excellency, Don José Maria Augustin Arroyes y Ruiz, lineal descendant of one who came with the Conquistador? You speak of danger—what is there to fear?"

"'Thar' is jist this to fear—we won't have time to reach a good and safe campin'-ground fur to-night, and thar's no tellin' what gangs of Injuns and other robbers and murderers may be scattered about, waitin' fur to jump onto us when they git a chance. We're gittin' into a bad region now, senior, and that's a fact."

"A fico for los Indios! My brave Mexicanos would scatter them like chaff before the wind."

"Like they scattered the Yankees at Buena Vista," rose to the lips of the outlaw, but he checked the utterance, and grinned grimly.

"I trust that you will not allow my presence to hinder or delay your journey, Don Manuel," said the handsome caballero. "I would not, for the world, that any injury should happen to your worthy self or your lovely daughter. I must say, however, that I see no cause for apprehension. There are seldom any hostile Indians, at this season, west of the Little Colorado, and we can easily gain a good camp for the night, as the trail, after crossing the gravelly ridge before us, again descends to the valley, where there is plenty of grass, wood, and water. If your guide apprehends danger, I should think it advisable for us to remain where we are, and recommence our journey in the morning."

"P'raps you know this here trail, stranger!" asked the outlaw, glancing suspiciously at Don Luis.

"I ought to know it, as I have travelled it several times."

"P'raps you know the Injuns that are to be found in these parts, and p'raps you mought be on good terms with some of 'em."

"I must confess that I know little about them, except from hearsay, and have never attempted to establish

friendly relations with any of them. In fact, I have always been careful to keep out of their way."

"Ugh! P'raps that soger man thar' knows suthin' about 'em."

"My man, Juan Stump, or Jack Stump, as he calls himself, knows nothing but my orders."

"Your Injun boy, I reckon, is tol'able well posted, 'cause it's a half-breed's nature to sneak around and fish out things."

"Trust him for that. Pedrocito's eyes are sharp, and his feet are swift on the trail. He knows his friends and his enemies, and I can safely confide in his sagacity and his knowledge of Indian character."

"You can, can you? Tol'able sharp fellers you must be, and an old guide and hunter of thirty years' standin' is nowhar' among sech. The train is your'n, Don Manuel, and your life is your own, and you can do with 'em as you choose. You hired me for a guide, and I only want to do my duty. I've done that in givin' you warnin', and you must take the consequences if you won't take the advice."

"*Vaya, hombre!*" exclaimed Don Manuel. "Speak no more of your paltry fears to Mexican gentlemen, whose swords are always ready to protect their lives and honours. We are our own defenders, while you are but a guide, and it does not please me to see you step beyond your position."

"The durned, crazy, yaller-skinned humbugs!" muttered the outlaw, as he walked away. "They can brag like bullies when thar's no enemy near, but a dozen Comanches would stampede them and thar' greasers afore they knowed what was up. I don't like the looks or actions of that fancy young chap, though. He knows too much, if he speaks the truth, and—well, I must speak to Ka-raibo about it."

"That is a faithful fellow," said Don Manuel, when the outlaw had been dismissed. "He is a thorough hunter, an excellent and careful guide, and I am sure that he means well; but he sometimes goes beyond the line of his duty, as you have seen, and becomes rather impertinent."

"I think so," answered the young gentleman.

"But it is all done through good will, and is caused by his excessive precaution for the safety of myself and my child. A singular circumstance happened, Don Luis, before I set out on this journey. I received a letter from a Yankee officer, telling me that this guide had formed a plan to betray me into the hands of the Indians, and imploring me to forego my expedition, or to procure another guide."

"Did you see any reason to believe the letter?"

"None at all. This man, Adams, came to me well recommended, and his talk—plain and blunt as you have heard it—convinced me that he was an honest and faithful guide. Besides, I knew well that the writer of the letter had an object in striving to prevent me from undertaking the journey."

"Indeed. You interest me. What could his object have been?"

"This fellow, who had been an officer in the Yankee army by which our nation was humiliated, had the assurance to fall in love with my daughter, Manuela."

"Don Manuel, you astonish me."

"It is but too true. He had met her, at San Diego, and elsewhere, I believe, and fell in love with her, or with her father's wealth. You can judge, I presume, which motive was the strongest."

"To me, Senor Vincente, the dark eyes of the senorita Manuela would present more attraction than all the silver

that was ever mined in Mexico ; but, with a calculating Yankee barbarian—*vaya !*”

“ His motive is plain to you, then, as it was to me. He desired to delay my journey, if not to put it off entirely, so that he might have an opportunity to press his suit.”

“ But your daughter—the Senorita Manuela—she would not have listened to his suit ?”

“ In that lay the trouble, Don Luis, for I have reason to believe that she had not only listened, but had weakly suffered herself to entertain some affection for this handsome barbarian ; for he was handsome, Don Luis, almost as handsome as yourself.”

Don Luis bowed low, in acknowledgment of this very unequivocal compliment.

“ It is plain,” said he, “ that this Yankee desired you to remain on the island, in order that he might carry out his designs upon your daughter.”

“ Undoubtedly. I learned, alas, that he was of bad character, having been kicked out of a low dance-house, for insulting a Mexican girl.”

“ He should have died. Who told you of that ?”

“ My guide—this Burt Adams.”

“ It is another proof of his devotion. The fellow had a scheme, no doubt, for eloping with your daughter, or carrying her away from your protection. These Yankees are capable of any enormities.”

“ You speak the truth, Don Luis ; there are no people capable of such enormities as the Yankees.”

“ I can prove it to you, Senor Vincente, by one of themselves. Jack Stump, hither ! attention !”

The dragoon follower of Don Luis marched up, saluted, and placed himself in the “ first position of a soldier.”

" Jack Stump, are you a Yankee?"

" No, senor ; I was a Yankee, but am now a Mexican."

" You appear to be easily naturalized, but I hope that you will not as easily throw off your new allegiance. Are not the Yankees capable of any and all enormities, Jack Stump?"

" Of all enormities, senor capitano."

" Can you name, Jack Stump, an enormity of which you know they are capable?"

The grizzle-bearded soldier scratched his head, and paused before he replied.

" What enormity do you name?" asked Don Manuel.

" Whippin' Mexicans, senor."

" What!"

" Caramba!"

" It's no use gettin' mad with me, senors," said the impassable soldier, as the two gentlemen started up from their seats. " When I was asked to name an enormity, I could only mention the most striking instance that occurred to me."

" A *striking* instance! Do you mean to insult us?" demanded Don Luis. " Get away, you scoundrel! Back to the rear, Jack Stump, in close order, and double-quick time."

The soldier turned, and quickly marched away.

" The fellow is not as well trained as I thought he was," said the young gentleman, but I hope to civilize him. That was only a thoughtless speech, that of his, Senor Vincente, for which his education and his habits are accountable, not his heart."

" I believe it, Don Luis. Those Yankees, as you say, are capable of any enormities, and I am glad, for the sake of Manuela, that I have taken this step."

“ Why so ?”

“ Because I shall place her in a convent, or with her aunt at Santa Fé. In a convent she would be safe, and he would be a bold man, indeed, who should venture to invade the sanctuary of the house of Senora Mercedita Garcias. But here comes my daughter, Don Luis. We will not mention any of these matters before her, if you please.”

Manuela, who had been directed by her father to array herself in her best, and who had, in consequence of his orders, bestowed much attention upon her toilet, then made her appearance, accompanied by her maid, Julia. The ceremony—for it was, indeed, a lengthy and wordy ceremony—of the introduction of Don Luis, was duly and grandiloquently performed by her father, and the eyes of the two young people met, as they raised their heads from the reverential attitudes prescribed by etiquette. Each seemed to be struck by the beauty and grace of the other, if their eyes spoke the truth ; but the appearance was only momentary, and they were soon conversing with the stateliness and propriety that belonged to Mexican ladies and gentlemen of wealth and high birth.

The noon-halt meal was made to contain as many of the elements of a real “ dinner ” as the ambulatory larder of Don Vincente could afford, and its deficiencies were washed away by an abundant supply of excellent wine, pressed from grapes that had fattened and ripened in the sunny vineyards of Xeres. Senor Vincente rejoiced in his position as a hospitable entertainer, and Don Luis and Manuela (who, although a heroine, had an excellent appetite) did full justice to the repast, unmindful of the distant scowls of Burt Adams.

The dinner, under the fastidious direction of Don

Manuel, occupied a long time, and when it was finished, it was agreed by all, Burt Adams included, that it would be best to remain where they were that night, and take a fresh start in the morning.

Accordingly, Senor Vincente ceremoniously escorted his daughter to her waggon, and returned to his own camp-fire, where he conversed with Don Luis and the Padre Roqué until a late hour, when all retired to rest, except the sentinels who had been placed about the camp by the guide.

CHAPTER IX.

MORE PLOTTING.

IT was with not a little reluctance that Manuela had obeyed the order of her father, when he directed her to attire herself in "gorgeous array," as she had no especial desire to see any young gentleman, however handsome or distinguished he might be, and was sure that she could not dress herself properly at that time and place, as she actually had "nothing to wear."

Her maid, Julia, thought differently. The mulatto peeped under the canvas cover of the waggon, and saw Don Luis, as he rode in on his splendid alazan, by the side of Senor Vincente, and did not fail to comment on his fine appearance, his graceful carriage, and his gay attire.

All these encomiums were lost on Manuela, whose thoughts were occupied with another handsome cavalier, and who submitted herself, with indolent indifference, to the careful manipulations of her maid.

When she was fully attired and adorned, and accompanied Julia to the spot where her father and the stranger

were awaiting her, a great change seemed to come over her. As she raised her eyes and met those of Don Luis, that were bent upon her in earnest but respectful admiration, a warm blush overspread her countenance, and she trembled as if she had received a sudden shock. When the young gentleman raised her fair hand, and touched it with his lips, she blushed again, and the tremor of her nerves was yet more plainly visible. The splendid eyes of the stranger, whose bright blue contrasted in such a peculiar manner with his jet black hair and beard, must have had a wonderful fascination for her, as she could not keep herself from gazing at them, with an expression in which admiration and bewilderment were strangely mingled. Don Luis exerted himself to gain her regard, and the mutual attraction of the two young persons was observed with pleasure by Senor Vincente, who, when his daughter had retired, congratulated the young gentleman on having made a conquest.

"I sincerely hope that I have," answered Don Luis, "but cannot flatter myself that I have accomplished so much. I have never seen a more beautiful lady."

"And I doubt whether she ever saw a more handsome and distinguished caballero than yourself. You can easily cause her to forget that Yankee officer, Don Luis, if you desire to do so."

Manuela's maid, also, had her ideas upon the same subject, and did not hesitate to communicate them to her young mistress.

"Your attractions have found another victim," said Julia, when they were again seated in the waggon. "The young caballero has surely fallen in love with you at first sight. He gazed at you as if he would like to eat you up with his eyes."

"What beautiful eyes he has!" sighed Manuela.

"Beautiful, indeed, *senorita*! I do not wonder that you were struck by them, and that you looked at them so closely. I begin to believe that you have fallen in love with them."

"They reminded me of the eyes of Captain Henry."

"You say that because they are blue, *senorita*; but the eyes of Captain Henry are not near as beautiful as these, nor does he have such splendid black hair and beard. Besides, what a high-sounding name is that of the caballero, and how gaily he is dressed! That is the man for your beauty, *senorita*, and it is plain that your father would be glad to have you love him and marry him. Then there would be no ugly convents or cross old maiden-aunts for us, but you would live in a city with your husband—perhaps, in beautiful Mexico—and would shine among the first. It would be very pleasant for me, also, *senorita*."

"You are quite enthusiastic, Julia, and can make excellent plans to please yourself, but you must allow me to use my own judgment, and it is my belief just now that I am sleepy. Don Luis has beautiful eyes, but it remains to be seen whether I will dream of them to-night."

Another person felt a deep interest in the advent of the young Mexican—namely, Burt Adams, the guide, who had been much chagrined when Don Luis and his party were suffered to join the train, and who was still more put out by the delay which their reception had caused.

It was important to the success of the outlaw's plan, that he should push the train through quite rapidly, and should reach the mountains within a reasonable time, as the tribe of Indians to whom he expected to sell Don Manuel and his treasure might be compelled by the season to

move southward, where they would be fully occupied with predatory excursions against the Mexicans. The arrival of the strangers had already caused an unpleasant delay, and their continued presence, together with the stately and long-winded hospitality of the old Don, might have the effect of upsetting his felonious project. He was in a very bad humour, therefore, when he sought Karaibo, for the purpose of holding a consultation with his ally.

He found the Malay seated by a camp-fire, smoking and meditating. Adams satisfied himself that no one was within hearing, and then lit his own pipe, seated himself on the ground, and opened the subject.

"Tell you what, Karaibo," he commenced, "things ain't workin' as this child would like to see 'em work."

The Malay raised his head, but was silent.

"Things ain't workin' right, old yaller-skin, and that's a fact. We'll be apt to git ourselves into a pickle, if we don't keep our eyes peeled. Did you notice that young chap and his party, who came into camp about noon?"

"Karaibo saw him—Mexicans—mighty fine."

"Durn his fine feathers! I'd like to pluck 'em, and to spile his beauty into the barg'in. That chap is in our way, yaller-skin."

"S'pose so."

"The stupid old Don has kept us here all day and night, as you may say, so that he could palaver his own lingo and guzzle his wine with this gay bird. If this sort of thing is to go on, we won't git into the mountings in time to meet our Injun friends, and then our game will be blocked. Besides, the cursed Mexicaner knows too much. He says he knows this trail well, and he's got a mizzabul little half-breed with him, who can foller every

foot of the way in the dark, and who can smell an Injun a mile off. If we were rid of this gay stranger, his men couldn't do anythin' without him, and we could easily manage the Mexican guards, with the help of our friends. That chap is in our way, Karaibo, and he must be got out of it."

"S'pose so. How got out?"

"Thar's more'n one way of doin' sech a job; but he must be *rubbed out*. You must help me, Karaibo, and we'll fix his flint for him afore many nights."

"Karaibo does not want to spill much blood."

"Think of the treasure, old yaller-skin; think of the gold and the silver!"

"Is there much?"

"Lots of it—stowed away in kegs and boxes in the old Don's waggon."

"But the Indians will take it."

"Not they, my boy. Leave me alone to take care of that, and I will fix it so that we git much the biggest half. They can have the train and the old man, but the gold shall be ours. That chap must be rubbed out afore we can be sartain of anythin', and you must help me."

"Karaibo is ready, if he can be sure of the gold. Tell him what to do."

"Both of us must watch him, whenever he leaves the camp, and while he stays in it, too, and we must be allers on the look-out fur a chance to sneak up and shoot him, or to rub him out in some way. When he turns up missin', it will be easy to lay it to the Injuns, 'cause nobody would be apt to suspect us."

"Karaibo will watch. If he sees the chance, he will tell you."

"Ya-as—or you might shoot him yourself, if the chance

is a mighty good one. We had better turn in now, as we shall want to start early in the mornin'."

Having thus explained his plan for a cold-blooded assassination, the outlaw wrapped himself in his blanket, and was soon sleeping that sound sleep which is said to visit the eyes of innocence.

But a pair of brilliant eyes had watched the plotters as they sat by the camp-fire, and a pair of eager ears had listened to every word of their conversation. When Adams laid down to sleep, a dark form uncoiled itself from the shadow of a pine, and glided away, as silently as a snake, through the grass and among the tall trees.

C H A P T E R X.

HATES AND LOVES.

THE train did not start as early the next morning as Adams had wished and expected it to. The cause of the delay again was the young Mexican, Don Luis. This caballero, who appeared to be a very devout Catholic, had expressed a desire to confess to Padre Roqué, and it was not to be supposed that Senor Vincente would allow his waggons to be got under weigh before that important ceremony was completed.

Don Luis, in company with the priest, entered an impromptu confessional, in the midst of a shady grove, and remained there nearly an hour, while the outlaw chafed and fretted, and clutched his rifle as if he would gladly shoot the interloper in broad daylight and near the camp. But prudence restrained him from such a course, and he occupied himself with preparations for the journey, vowing that the animals should travel fast enough to make up for lost time.

When the two came out from the grove, it might have been supposed that the old priest had been confessing to the young cavalier, for there were tears in Padre Roqué's eyes, and he was clasping the hands of Don Luis beseechingly.

"You do not deceive me!" he exclaimed. "It cannot be possible that you would deceive me!"

"Of course, I would not. If I had no other reason for telling you the truth, my happiness is concerned in the result fully as much as yours, I think."

"I must believe, then, that you will be true to me, and will serve me as far as you can. But are you sure that you do not deceive yourself?"

"I do not see how it is possible for me to be mistaken. I have my information from the most trustworthy sources, from men in whom I can thoroughly confide, and I think I shall be able to prove its truth when we fairly reach the mountain ranges. All the circumstances—time, place, appearance, manners, language, and the relics that she still retains—point to this woman as your daughter. I only hope that you may not be disappointed when you find her."

"Disappointed? What do you mean?"

"It is possible that she may have become so wedded to her present life, that she may be unwilling to leave it and accept the trammels of civilization."

"God grant that it may not be so! I tremble when I think of it. You will remember and heed the warning that I gave you, senor?"

"Certainly, and I thank you for it; but it is nothing more than I had expected. I shall be on my guard, and I have no fear."

"I, also, will watch, and pray God to keep you safe."

It was with many a grumble and scowl, and not a few muttered curses, that Burt Adams at last set the train in motion, after the long and unnecessary delay. His black looks were principally directed towards Don Luis, who paid no attention to them, but rode by the waggon of Don Vincente, or that of his daughter, chatting gaily, and enlivening the journey that had previously been so tedious.

It was not long before he persuaded Manuela to mount her horse and ride with him. Sometimes they lingered behind the caravan, and sometimes they galloped on before it; but it was to be observed that they were always together, and that their intimacy seemed to be a very close one, considering their short acquaintance; but it is very natural for such intimacies to spring up among young people who are travelling together in the wilderness. Senor Vincente interposed no objection to this companionship, but was delighted to see that his daughter had found favour in the eyes of the handsome and distinguished Don Luis.

The young cavalier soon perceived that Adams was urging forward the animals at such a rapid rate that they were becoming exhausted, and it was probable that some of them would fall down and die of fatigue, unless they were permitted to proceed more leisurely, or a halt was called. Escorting Manuela back to her waggon, he waited on Senor Vincente, explained to him what was being done, and received authority from the old Don to act as he thought proper. He then went to the outlaw, who was still urging on the train, in spite of the remonstrances of the drivers and teamsters, and inquired his reason for pushing forward in such a reckless manner. Being gruffly told that it was none of his business, he pointed out the

condition of the horses and mules, and declared that they would soon be unfit for use if such furious driving was persisted in. He was again told to mind his own business, and he then quietly informed the outlaw that he had been directed by Don Manuel to call a halt as soon as the river-bottom was reached, and that the train, in the meantime, must moderate its speed.

At this Adams was thoroughly enraged, and his spite and hatred "cropped out" in every wrinkle of his rugged face.

"And who in thunder are you," he shouted, "to come and give orders to me? Ain't it enough that you've come interlopin' here, whar' you had no business, and whar' you wasn't wanted, but you must be puttin' on your French airs over a free white American citizen? I b'lieve you're nothin' but a cussed spy, anyhow, and I don't car' the flap of a beaver's tail fur you or your orders."

"The orders are not mine," persisted Don Luis; "they are the orders of Senor Vincente."

"I don't believe a word of it."

"You can easily learn that it is true, by inquiring. But here comes Don Manuel, who can explain his directions for himself."

In fact, the old Don, perceiving that there was an altercation at the front, had mounted his horse, and rode up to see what was the matter. He noticed the condition of the animals, repeated the instructions that he had given to Don Luis, and rode back in company with his young friend.

Burt Adams shook his fist at them when their backs were turned, but his wrath was, for a few moments, too hot for utterance.

"It's too infernal bad," he muttered, between his

clenched teeth, "that a free white American citizen should be backed down in this way by a couple of cowardly greasers! Won't I pay 'em up fur it when my time comes! The old Don will have to shell out all his rocks afore he gits loose, and t'other will fare wuss. If I was a little further ahead, I'd pick up a quarrel with that young chap, and kill him anyhow, but I've got to wait, though it's mighty rilin' "

Much against his will, the outlaw halted the train in the river-bottom, and another long "nooning" ensued, which filled the measure of his wrath against Don Luis, although the animals were really in no condition to continue the journey, without a good rest. Thereafter, if anything went wrong with him in the train—if a linch-pin dropped out, if a pole or an axle broke, if a piece of harness gave way, or if any of those accidents happened that are continually occurring to travellers in the wilderness—he was sure to lay the blame, and shower his curses, upon the young cavalier, on whose shoulders they fell, if he ever heard them, with the weight of feathers.

The fact is, that Don Luis became so absorbed in the society of the charming Manuela, that he had no time to play any pranks with Burt Adams, or to rouse the angry passions of that testy guide, if he had had the inclination to do so. He was almost continually in her company, and as often with her in the presence of her father as in his absence, for the old Don took a peculiar pleasure in witnessing the interviews between the daughter of his affections and the scion of the illustrious house of Arroyes y Ruiz.

The following conversation, which took place at the waggon of Don Manuel, after an early evening halt, may

serve to show the confidential relations that had been established between the three.

"I understand you to say, Don Luis," remarked Senor Vincente, "that my daughter has told you about the Yankee officer who had the audacity to attempt to visit us at the hacienda."

"She has said but little concerning him, senor, and has given me no further information than you imparted to me some time since."

"You are very careless, Don Luis. It seems strange to me, that you, as a lover, do not seek to inquire further concerning one who desired to become your rival."

"Perhaps I am too vain to fear rivalry. But I would really like to learn something more about the fellow. You said that he was handsome."

"Nearly as handsome as yourself, I said, Don Luis."

"Do you think so, Manuela?"

"That question is too direct for me to answer. His eyes were like yours, Don Luis, and do you not think, father, that his voice sounded much like that of our friend?"

"By no means, my child. Don Luis speaks with the pure Castilian accent, while that fellow, whenever he attempted our language, could not help betraying his vulgar Yankeeisms."

"Was he of good family?" asked the young gentleman.

"Whoever heard of a good Yankee family?" fiercely replied Don Manuel. "He was wealthy, as I understood, or his father was, but what Yankee knows anything about family? That he was a Yankee, was sufficient reason to me for excluding him from my premises."

"To change a disagreeable subject," said Don Luis, "that is a very neat cornelian cross that you have, senorita. As I live, there are two initials engraved upon

it. 'H. T.' are the letters, I think. Can it be that they are the initials of a lover?"

"I must confess that the cross has belonged to one who has desired to be considered a lover. Quite *apropos* to your conversation, the initials are those of the Yankee captain of whom we have been speaking."

"What!" angrily exclaimed Don Manuel. "How do you happen to have an article of his in your possession? How dare you keep it?"

"I received it in such a singular manner, father, that I have retained it as a curiosity. We had been but a short time on our journey, when I found, one evening, this trifle in my waggon, lying on my cushion. As neither Julia or myself could explain its presence there, I kept it, as I said, out of curiosity. I knew it belonged to Captain Taylor, as I had seen him wear it."

"Are you sure that it had not been presented to you, and packed away in your baggage?"

"I am sure that I never had it in my hand before. Besides, Julia's sharp eyes would have seen it."

"You should have thrown it away in disgust."

"Why throw away the bauble? Perhaps the mystery connected with it might some day be explained."

"It is a very singular circumstance, and I am hardly satisfied about it. You had better give me the cross, Manuela."

"Perhaps the senorita will condescend to bestow it upon me," said Don Luis. "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's."

"So we are told in Scripture," answered Manuela, with a blush. "You are welcome to it, Don Luis, and I am sure that I leave it in better hands than my own."

"That gives the finishing stroke to the Yankee," said

Don Manuel, rubbing his hands. "Come, my children, it is growing late, and I feel the need of rest."

When Manuela resigned herself to the care of her maid that night, Julia noticed the absence of the cross, and taxed her mistress with having given it away.

"Why should I not?" answered the lady. "Can one be constant for ever, and at any distance? We Mexicans must have our flirtations, and our changes of heart, or life would be very dreary."

CHAPTER XI.

TWO SHOTS.

BURT ADAMS' hatred of Don Luis, and his desire to get the young cavalier out of the way, had not died, nor were they sleeping. He was only waiting until he could get a good chance to accomplish his object, by a bullet or a knife. He had opportunities enough, but they occurred too close to the camp or the train, or there was some other difficulty about them, that made him sure that he would be discovered if he attempted to put his plan into execution. Karaibo had even worse luck, for he declared that he had not been able to get one fair shot, and he was such a bad marksman, that he was sure he would miss.

But the outlaw found what he considered a splendid opportunity, one dark afternoon. He had gone about two miles ahead of the train, to discover a good camping-place for the night, when he caught sight, through an opening in the wood, of the handsome figures of Don Luis and Manuela, who were also returning towards the train.

His resolution was instantly taken. He dismounted,

carefully concealed his horse, ascended an elevation, and took a sure aim, resting his rifle on the stump of a fallen tree.

"Just let him get within range," said the villain, "so that I can drop him without hittin' the gal, and he's as good as dead."

He came within range, and the outlaw pulled the trigger of his fatal piece.

The ball whistled by Don Luis's left ear, cut a feather from Manuela's hat, and buried itself in a tree.

"That shot was not meant for you, Manuela," said the cavalier. "Remain where you are for a moment, for you are as safe here as elsewhere.

So saying, he quickly galloped back, with his keen eyes resting on the ground, until something attracted his attention, when he dismounted, and carefully examined leaves, grass, sticks, and earth.

"Just as I supposed," he muttered, as he mounted, galloped back to Manuela, and dug the bullet out of the tree with his knife.

"What did it mean?" anxiously inquired Manuela.

"Some one has shot at me. There may be Indians in these woods, and we must be more careful hereafter. But this, Manuelita mia, is what the Yankee hunters call a *chawed* bullet, a bullet that is intended for some particular foe, and I have never known such a custom among the Indians in these parts."

"Do you suspect—"

"I suspect nothing. The shot must have been fired by some roving brigand or outlying Indian. Let us rejoin our friends."

Burt Adams cursed his luck when he saw that his *chawed* bullet had missed, but deemed it best to "make

himself scarce;" accordingly, he mounted, and rode swiftly to meet the train, by a rather circuitous route. At the evening halt, he electrified the camp by stating that he "suspicioned" Indians were about, as he had heard a shot, and had seen some "sign."

"I am of the same opinion," said Don Luis, "for a bullet whistled close to my ear, and I have it in my pocket. Look at it, Adams, and tell me whether it is not what you Yankees call a *chawed* bullet."

"I sca'cely think it is," answered the outlaw, "although it mought be. I reckon I had better make a scout to-night."

"One shot has been fired," said Don Luis to Padre Roqué, when he met that reverend ecclesiastic.

"And you are safe, thank God! May He save you from the next!"

"Amen! I shall be more careful hereafter. I shall go out to-night."

A scout was considered a proper precaution, as the party were then near the head of a fork of the Colorado that had its rise in the mountains, and the trail was becoming dangerous.

"If you're goin' to scout with me, stranger," said Adams, when the searching arrangement had been made, "you'd better jest slip in under the trees to the right, down by the river-bank, and I'll take the brush on the risin' ground. If thar's any Injuns about, we're safe to find 'em that way."

"I will do as you advise," said Don Luis, diving into the timber like an experienced woodman.

"The chap does know a thing or two most too much for a greaser," muttered the outlaw, as he poised his rifle, and walked off into the upland.

As Adams moved away, he was silently and stealthily followed by a dark form, that crouched low among the grass and bushes, identifying itself with the sombre herbage.

Don Luis swiftly skirted the bank of the small stream, keeping carefully in the shadow, until he reached a clump of scraggy undergrowth, on which he hung his hat and embroidered jacket. There was a "small sprinkle" of moon, and such an object would easily be visible, even at a very considerable distance, to sharp and practised eyes.

Then the young cavalier left the river-bottom, and swiftly crept up the hill-side, sheltering himself from observation behind the trunks of the great trees, the clumps of bushes, and the irregularities of the ground, until he reached a point near the summit of the ridge, when he stopped, and crouched down behind a bush, watching anxiously with his eyes and ears open, and with his rifle ready for action. He had not long to wait. A shot was fired from a short distance beyond him, and he rushed forward to where he had seen the flame and the smoke.

When Burt Adams went into the upland, as he had said he would do, he did not continue in a straight course, but diverged somewhat down the side of the hill, and kept his eyes fixed on the tall trees near the river bank, as if he expected an enemy to appear from that direction, instead of from the bushy growth in which he was moving.

At last he caught sight of something that glistened, in the pale light of the moon, over a ragged clump. He crouched to the ground, raised his rifle, and took a steady aim at the object.

"I won't miss this time, by heaven!" he muttered, and pulled the trigger.

As he partly rose, to view the effect of his shot, he was seized from behind, and thrown backward. The outlaw was a man of great physical strength, and he overturned his assailant, but another pair of hands clasped his throat, and then a stronger grasp seized his arms, and he was borne to the ground and held there.

As he looked up, he saw that it was Don Luis who bent over him, with his knee on his breast, and that those holding his arms were the old priest and the half-breed boy. The outlaw gritted his teeth, but could do nothing to release himself.

"I have caught you," said Don Luis, "and now I want to know why you have shot at me twice."

"I didn't shoot at you," grumbled Adams. "I shot at an Injun."

"Don't lie about it, *hombre*. That is my hat through which you have put a bullet, and you thought my head was inside of it. You know, as well as I do, that there are no Indians near us. You shot at me this afternoon with a *chawed* bullet, for I saw your track plain enough. The truth is, I suppose, that you wanted to kill me because you were jealous of me, and because I interfered with you. I can hardly blame you, but it is very unfair to shoot at a man behind his back. I would expect such an act of a cowardly thief or assassin, but not of a real American hunter. If I let you go, will you promise that you will not try to kill me again, unless in fair fight?"

"Yes; I promise," answered the outlaw, who was quite bewildered.

"Let him rise, *amigos*. Pedrocito, bring my hat and

jacket from yonder bush. We will now return to camp, and will say nothing concerning this affair, except to report that we have seen no Indians."

During the next morning's march, Burt Adams was quite gloomy and chopfallen. He was humiliated by his defeat; he could not understand how he had been detected and caught; and he was completely puzzled by the lenity of the man he had sought to assassinate. He hated the young cavalier more bitterly than ever, and meditated on the vengeance he would take when his time came.

They were now fairly in the mountains, and the way was becoming difficult as well as dangerous. Don Luis neglected the society of Manuela, for the purpose of "prospecting" from all available points, and the half-breed boy frequently rode far in advance, and returned. At last, when he came back, he reported to his master in these concise words:—

"Smoke—Injun."

"Just as I expected. Can you go straight to Dick Hennessey's ranch, on the Little Bear!"

"Straight as the bird flies."

Don Luis scribbled a few lines on a piece of paper, and handed it to the boy.

"Ride fast," said he; "don't spare your horse, and give this to Sergeant Crofut, at the ranch. You will know where to strike our trail."

The boy started off like an arrow from the bow.

The unusual actions of the young cavalier and the half-breed had not been unnoticed by Burt Adams. He thought, as he expressed it to himself, that there was "something up," and he soon came to the conclusion that he had better seek his Indian allies, and prepare an

ambuscade, leaving Karaibo in the lurch. But he did not wish to take himself off without showing some cause. Accordingly, at the noon halt, he told Senor Vincente that he was unwilling to accompany the train any further; that he had been subjected to continual annoyances and insults since the arrival of Don Luis; that he was not willing to bear it any longer, and that either he or the young cavalier must leave the train.

"But you will forfeit your pay," suggested Don Manuel.

"I don't car' a cuss for that. Either I or that young chap must quit the caravan; and that's words with the bark on 'em."

"This must not be, my friend," interposed Don Luis. "You must not allow any personal difference between you and me to interfere with the safety of Senor Vincente and his daughter. For my part, I am ready to make any apology, and to promise that I will not again interfere with your management of the train, by word or act. We are now approaching a dangerous region, and need a guide. It will be necessary to retain you, if we are obliged to march you with a pistol at your head; but we had rather increase your pay. I again say, my friend, that this *must not be*, and I beg you to change your resolution."

"Wal, I reckon I'll stay if you'll keep that promise, stranger. Whar' is that boy of yours?"

"I suppose he has strayed away. He is a wild youth, and is often absent without leave."

"Whar' have I heard that voice afore?" muttered the outlaw, as he walked away. "I've heard it somewhar', fur sartin, and I've seen jist that flash of the eye from some chap who meant what he said. Durned if it don't kinder git me. Wal, my time will come mighty soon."

CHAPTER XII.

A DOUBLE DISCOVERY.

THE place which the outlaw had selected for a camp that night was surely not such as would have commended itself to a judicious man who was accustomed to frontier life, and to the habits of the wild tribes of Indians, who roamed over that region. There was good water, it is true, for the location was on a brook that might have been one of the sources of the Gila river. There was also good grass, for the brook ran through a little cañon or glen, and on each bank was quite a meadow. There was wood in abundance, for the sides of the glen were covered and crowned with a stout growth of timber. To the inexperienced eyes of Don Manuel, it appeared to be a very pleasant and eligible spot in which to pass the night, and he went so far as to compliment Adams upon the selection he had made.

Don Luis thought differently. To him the place seemed very well chosen for an ambuscade or an attack. If there were Indians in the vicinity, he considered, and they were disposed to make an assault for purposes of plunder or murder, they could easily surprise and overwhelm the little party in charge of the train. Another rather peculiar circumstance was, that Adams had made a very early halt, contrary to his usual custom of urging on the teams, and making as much of a day's march as he could.

All these things the young cavalier noticed, and they appeared to him, to say the least, quite suspicious. In fact, it may as well be stated, that something of the kind was what he had been looking for. But he said nothing concerning his doubts or surmises, for he had promised

the guide that he would interfere with him no more, by word or act. He allowed Don Manuel to rest secure in the enjoyment of his pleasant camping-ground, and devoted himself to the society of Manuela.

When an early supper had been discussed, the outlaw stated that he feared there might be hostile Indians in the vicinity, and that he thought it best to make a scout, in order to see if he could find any "sign."

"I will accompany you, senor," said Padre Roqué, "if you have no objection."

"None at all, old man," answered Burt, "though you don't seem adzackly cut out for sech business. Come along, if you want to, and if you happen to git hurt, or to git into trouble, don't blame me. P'raps you'd like to go with us, stranger?"

"I believe I had rather not," replied Don Luis. "I have had enough of scouting for the present."

So the outlaw, mounted on his stout horse, and fully armed, set out with the old priest, who rode his ambling mule, and carried his pack and his rifle. They left Senor Vincente placidly smoking his cigar, and Don Luis quietly conversing with Manuela, while the Mexican guards lay listlessly about their camp-fires.

Down the gully went Burt Adams, closely followed by the priest, until he reached a narrow pass that led towards the north. Into this he turned, and both traversed it, although with some difficulty, until they reached a timbered ascent that led them in an easterly direction. It was as yet hardly dusk, and they could easily see their way by the faint light. The moon, too, would soon rise, and they would not be troubled by lack of light.

"Wal, old man," said the outlaw, as their animals came together on the rising ground, "do you think

you're goin' to have some real good Catholic fun along with me?"

"I do not know what you mean," answered the priest. "Are you a Catholic?"

"I'm almost anythin', if it will pay me, and can do almost anythin' fur pay."

"But you would not, for instance, murder a man, and steal his gold, and carry off his child?"

"What do you mean, old man!" queried the outlaw, turning sharply upon the padre.

"Nothing, my good sir. I had no thought of offending you. Do you think we will meet with any Indians?"

"Can't adzackly say. Thar' mout be Injuns, and thar' mout not. Did you ever see stars, old chap!"

"I have seen the stars in the heavens."

"Reckon you may see some more arter a while. If you come to any harm, it will be your own fault, as I told you."

"I trust in God and in my patron saint."

As they rose to the summit of the ridge, the smoke of an Indian village was in view. Beyond, on a level plateau, among the trees, could be seen about twenty lodges.

"Thar's Injuns afore us," said the outlaw. "Ain't you afeard, old man?"

"I fear nothing, when I am in the performance of my duty."

"Wal, it's possible they may be friendly Injuns, and I reckon our duty lies, jist now, in the direction of ridin' on and seein' what sort of folks they hang out to be."

"I am willing to go with you," answered the padre; "but I must say that my mule, if we are forced to retreat, cannot run as fast as your horse."

"Never mind that, old chap; I'll take car' of you."

Here comes some of the red-skins, and we'll ride up and see what they are."

Several mounted Indians, half naked, painted, and plumed, and armed with guns, came galloping forth from the village. Burt Adams halted, and allowed them to approach him. When they came near, he gave the Indian sign of amity, and then waved his hand, in imitation of the crawling of a snake, which was the usual Comanche greeting.

The Indians appeared to understand it, for they rode up to where he was, and exchanged greetings with him, as if they recognized him for an old acquaintance.

This ceremony finished, the Indians returned to the village, accompanied by Adams and the priest, the former boisterous and noisy, the latter calm and collected.

"Wal, old Grizzly," said the outlaw, addressing a gaily-plumed Indian who appeared to act as the leader of the party, "I've come back, you see, like a bad sixpence; but it is not for nothin' I've come, and I've got a fine job on hand fur you. You know I never furgit my friends."

"Ugh! You show us whar' to git money?"

"Yas, and plenty of it, too, old Grizzly, besides other things that we'll have to talk about. In the fust place, though, tie up this old chap, and keep him safe. I told him he mought git into trouble if he came with me, but he jest would come, and we must fasten him up, so's he can't tell 'bout what we're goin' to do."

"Brown Bear can't hurt *him*," said the savage, glancing at the garb of the old priest, whose sacred character was held in esteem by most of his tribe.

"I don't ax you to hurt him, old Grizzly. I don't car' whether you hurt him or not, but he must be fixed so that he won't spile our plans."

The Indian made a sign, and the padre was seized, his rifle was taken from him, his arms were tied, and his mule was led by one of his captors. To all this he submitted unresistingly, and with no change in the calm and placid expression of his countenance.

"And now, old Grizzly," said the outlaw, "what's the news with you folks? Whar's the chief, Mascepah? Are all the young men in the village?"

"Chief gone. Young men 'most all gone."

"Thunder! Do you mean to say that, old Grizzly? Whar' have the chief and the young men gone to?"

"Gone to the south. We were poor; we wanted horses and cattle, and blankets and money. Want scalps, too."

"I mought have knowed it. I was afeard of it all along. Cuss that infernal pup of a Mexican dandy. It's all through him that I've been bothered and held back, until the folks I wanted are all off on other business. I wish I'd killed him; but luck was somehow ag'in me. Won't I take it out of him when my time comes? He'll never steal the bait out of my trap ag'in. The young men ain't all gone, though, old Grizzly. How many are left in the village?"

"Most forty warriors."

"Who's chief?"

"Mascepah's squaw, Paquita. She jest so much chief as him."

Paquita! What was there in the name that made the old priest start and tremble, and sent the blood gushing up to his face? Whatever the cause may have been, the effect was not observed by the others, and the next moment he was again calm and collected.

"Forty, or less, are plenty, old Grizzly," said Adams, "and I reckon you're chief when it comes to fightin'. I've

got a train for you that I've brought a long ways, and it's camped only a few miles from here. It belongs to a rich old Mexican, who has waggons, mules, and horses, and lots of gold and silver. His handsome darter is with him, and a gay young Mexican, who can afford to pay a big ransom. The guards are sca'cely anythin' except a few greasers, who'd be sure to run at the fust yell or show of a scalpin'-knife. I've stuck 'em away down in a cañon, whar' it will be jest as easy as rollin' off a log to pick 'em all up, and you red-skins shall have the biggest share in the divide."

"We go," said the savage, "go this night."

"That's the way to talk, old Grizzly. Now I know you mean business. Jest put this chap whar' he can't git away, and we'll go to work, for I reckon we hain't got much time to lose."

Padre Roqué, still unresisting, calm and quiet, was taken from his mule, was placed within a lodge, and two Indians were set to guard him. Adams soon had his arrangements made, and the Brown Bear had no difficulty in recruiting a party for the capture of Don Manuel and his train. About twenty-five warriors were picked for the purpose, and they set out, before the night was half spent, fully armed, painted, and plumed, and eager to signalize themselves by a deed of pillage and murder. Burt Adams took the lead, chuckling as he put another *charged* bullet in his rifle, and vowing that that missile should not fail to find its mark.

They had not been gone a long time, when the old priest called his guard, and demanded that he should be taken before Paquita, the chief's squaw. He was attentively listened to by the savages, who had not entirely forgotten the teachings of the Jesuits, and they complied

with his request. He was taken to a lodge more pretentious than the others, made of skins stretched upon poles and painted with grotesque figures.

When he entered, he found himself in the presence of a dark-skinned young woman, attired in the height of the Comanche fashion, who was reclining on a couch of furs. She rose to receive him, waved her hand, and the Indian guards left the lodge, remaining without.

"What do you want?" she asked.

The old priest trembled, and his face again flushed, as his glance took in the handsome face, the fine figure, the piercing black eyes, and the commanding air of the forest beauty. But his hesitation was only momentary. He took off his broad hat, and removed a wig and a false beard, disclosing the features of Miguel Martinez, the old Mexican who had listened to Burt Adams' bloody recital in the fonda near the foot of the sierra.

"Paquita, my daughter, do you not know me?"

The woman clasped her hands on her head, and bent forward, as she stared at the old man.

"I know you now," she answered, quite coldly. "What do you wish?"

"I want *you*, my daughter. Do you not know that I am your father, Paquita?—that you were stolen from me years ago, by a ruffian who thought he had murdered me? My life has been miserable without you, and I have sought for you by day and night, though I never dared to hope to see you again. I have found you now, Paquita, and you must leave these savages, and go with your lonely and heart-broken old father."

"I cannot. I am the squaw of the chief Mascepah, and I love my husband and my children. I cannot leave them."

"Is this is a place or a life fit for the daughter of your mother? Here is a miniature of that blessed saint. Look at it, Paquita, and tell me if it does not recal to you your home and your friends."

Paquita burst into tears as she gazed at the portrait, but she quietly brushed them away, and was again composed.

"My home is here," she said, "and the friends of my husband are my friends. I will stay."

"Did you ever know, Paquita, who it was that carried you off, after leaving me for dead?"

"I never heard his name, and I was too badly troubled and frightened to remember his features."

"Yet you have seen him, and have seen him lately. He is even now with your warriors, guiding them to the murder and pillage of a party of peaceful whites. It was he who delivered me into your hands."

"Is this true? Do you mean Burt Adams?"

"He is the man. I overheard him avow the deed, and boast of it. I might have slain him; but I followed him here, hoping to find you, and then to make my vengeance sure and terrible."

"Mascepah never told me of this, or the man should have perished. The vengeance shall come now, for both of us. Wait until the warriors return from the attack."

"But they are attacking my friends, those who have aided and comforted me."

"It cannot be helped. Would you try to call a wolf off from his prey? The young men must have their booty, and we must wait. I will ride out to meet them, when the time comes, and will then have my revenge."

CHAPTER XIII.

A NIGHT ATTACK.

As soon as the outlaw and the priest had left the camp, Don Luis took Senor Vincente aside, and spoke to him, with a very serious expression on his fine countenance.

"I must no longer delay communicating to you," he said, "some very important intelligence that I have received, that concerns the safety of yourself and of us all."

"What do you mean! You seem to be in earnest."

"I am in earnest, and I mean to say that a plot has been laid by your guide to lead you into an ambush, and to betray you to a band of Indians whose village is but a short distance from here. He expects to share with them in our scalps and our plunder. I have reason to believe that the plan was arranged before you left the coast."

"Can this be true, Don Luis? It agrees with what was told me by that Yankee captain."

"I believe he told you the truth. I have overheard the plan spoken of between the guide and his Malay friend. Adams has now gone to the Indians, for the purpose of bringing them here to capture us."

"Why, then, did he take the padre?"

"I have not time to explain why the padre went, but his mission is not one of harm. If you wish for proof of this plot, summon the Malay, and we will question him. If he is not willing to confess, he can be made to confess."

Karaibo was called, and was duly interrogated by the two gentlemen, but he refused to answer a word.

"Bring a rope," said Don Luis, "and we will soon induce him to tell the truth."

The Malay's arms were secured behind his back, a lariat was produced and tied loosely around his neck, and Jack Stump, under the directions of the young cavalier, throwing the end of the lariat over a bough, hauled him up from the ground, until he was nearly choked, and expressed a willingness to tell all he knew. When he was let down, he confirmed in every particular the story of the plot, as it had been related to Senor Vincente.

"*Misericordia!*" exclaimed the old Don; "what will become of us? We shall all be murdered, and my daughter, my Manuela, what will happen to her? Did you know of this, Don Luis? Why did you not speak to me before?"

"I more than suspected it, but the pear was not ripe. See what an excellent place your guide has chosen for an ambush! We could be surrounded and captured, with hardly a chance to defend ourselves."

"And I had thought that he had selected such a pleasant camp."

"Pleasant enough for his purpose. We must immediately move to higher ground, where we can form a barricade, and defend ourselves against an assault. We have no time to lose, for I firmly believe that we will be attacked before morning."

This advice was followed without delay. The horses and mules were harnessed and hitched up, and the train retraced its steps, until it reached a clump of timber on the plateau, which would not only afford shelter to the party, but give them a commanding position. The waggons were so placed as to form a partial defence, and a rude barricade was hastily constructed of fallen logs and brush. The fires in the deserted camp were replenished, while more were started above, and all waited anxiously

for the terrible struggle that was now believed to be impending.

Don Luis having noticed the weapon that the Malay carried, removed its cover, and perceived that it was a fine, five-chambered revolving rifle. He took it to Karaibo, and asked him where he got it.

"I nursed a sick Englishman, and he gave it to me," was the answer.

"If he has done such a good action, Senor Vincente," suggested the young gentleman, "he cannot be wholly bad. I believe he will fight for us, if we allow him to."

"Karaibo will fight for you," replied the Malay.

"Take my rifle, then, and give me this, for I can use it better than you. Jack Stump, untie his hands."

Manuela and her maid were placed in as secure a position as possible, and the party watched in silence and anxiety until after midnight, when they were startled by yells of disappointment and rage, that proceeded, as they well knew, from Indian throats. Soon they heard the voice of Burt Adams, from near the edge of the cañon.

"It's that infernal young Mexican chap," said he, "who has made 'em give us the slip. I was afeard he knew too much, but he won't know anythin' more arter I lay hands onto him. Come on, red-skins! Foller the trail, and we'll dig 'em out of thar' holes."

The whooping and yelling of the savages showed that they were on the trail, and the foremost of them shortly came in sight of the clump of timber, in which, as they could easily see, the whites had taken refuge.

A portion of the Indians dismounted and crept towards the timber, others wildly careered about on their horses, and all, under the orders of Burt Adams, surrounded the camp, and prepared for the attack. The white men

had not been idle in the meantime. Don Luis had placed the Mexican guards behind the barricades, and had assigned responsible positions to the old Don, to Jack Stump, and to the Malay, and thus they lay down and awaited the onset.

It came fully as soon as it was expected, and came like a thunder-storm, "all in a bunch." The plain suddenly seemed alive with yelling Indians, and above all their cries could be heard the harsh voice of Burt Adams, as he hounded on his savage allies. Simultaneously they rushed upon the camp, firing their rifles and fuses, but were met by a rapid, if not a well-directed reply. The escopetas and rusty muskets of the guards were not of much use, but Jack Stump behaved like a veteran, Karaibo and Senor Vincente proved themselves skilful in the use of their weapons, and the revolving rifle, in the hands of Don Luis, was very effective.

Repulsed at first, the savages charged up to the barricades before their opponents had time to reload, and a hand-to-hand fight ensued, in which the white men fought with the fury of desperation. It was brought to an end by the fall of the outlaw, whom Karaibo knocked down with the butt of his rifle. He was carried away by the howling pack, and the defenders were allowed a breathing space. They found they had suffered quite severely, for three of the Mexicans had been killed, and Jack Stump was disabled.

"Will they return! Are we safe now?" eagerly asked Senor Vincente.

"If that man was killed," replied Don Luis, "they will not return; if he was only stunned, we shall soon have them on our hands again, and I fear we may not be able to defeat them, in our weakened condition."

“ If it had not been for your presence, we would have already been murdered. If you save us now, Don Luis, I will owe you an eternal debt of gratitude. I believe that you love my daughter ; if we escape with our lives, she shall be yours.”

“ You could offer me no better boon, senor, and I hope to claim your promise. If I had been a Yankee, you would not have made it.”

“ You are mistaken, my friend, for my opinions have changed. It turns out that the Yankee officer whom I drove from my hacienda told me the truth about that scoundrel Adams, but I was so foolishly prejudiced that I would not believe him. Hark ! are they not coming again ?”

“ I think they are, and we must do our best. We may yet receive succour, for I know that there are Yankee soldiers in the vicinity. To your posts, men—all who are able !”

“ Whatever may happen, defend Manuela.”

“ With my life.”

In this assault the savages advanced more cautiously, and the defenders of the camp were able to oppose to them but a feeble front. They did their best, and the rifles of Don Luis and the Malay rung the death-knell of two of the red-skins ; but the enemy were well concealed, and continued to advance carefully, until they rose with a yell, and threw themselves upon the camp.

“ Knives and clubs !” shouted Don Luis. “ Let us make them pay for their victory !”

It looked like a victory, as the savages swarmed up to the barricades, where they were still confronted by the few white men. It would have been a victory, if there had not been heard the galloping of horses, followed by a

volley and a cheer, which Don Luis answered with a shout of triumph.

The red-skins turned in dismay, as they saw a dozen United States dragoons, in their blue uniforms, swooping down the slope of the plain upon them. They hastened to secure their horses—as many as could—and went off, helter-skelter, towards the village, in spite of the efforts of Burt Adams to rally them. The outlaw, perceiving that he was no longer supported, turned and fled with them, trusting to the speed and endurance of his good horse.

The congratulations between the defenders of the camp and their rescuers were few but hearty.

“You were just in time, Sergeant Crofut,” said Don Luis, “and Pedrocito has done well. Leave two of your men here, and I will ride with you in pursuit of those scoundrels.”

The young cavalier and the Malay were soon mounted, and set out with the dragoons, following the retreating marauders, while Don Manuel fell on his knees, and offered fervent thanks for the preservation of his child's life and his own. Manuela emerged from her concealment, and assisted to bind up the arm of Jack Stump.

CHAPTER XIV.

FATHER AND DAUGHTER.

PAQUITA walked out of the wigwam, with form erect and stately tread, leaving the old man wringing his hands in anguish. For a few moments he gazed after her retreating figure, and then sinking down upon the couch of furs, buried his face in his hands, and bitter, scalding tears poured down his withered cheeks.

Could it be possible, he thought, that this was really his daughter, the child of his love, the offspring of his happier years, the only living relic of the wife whom he had loved so fondly? Could this be the bright, beautiful, and innocent child, who had been the joy and delight of his happy home, until it had been ravaged by the ruthless destroyer? Was it in the nature of things that she could have changed so utterly as to forget her living father and her dead mother, and all the comforts and blessings of civilized life, and desire to remain, during the rest of her days, among these wild and bloodthirsty savages?

The miserable old man did not pause to think that a woman almost always will, as Scripture bids her, forsake father and mother, and cleave to her husband and him only. He did not pause to think that this was more frequently the case among the simple and untutored children of nature, than among the artificial existences of civilized life.

The bereaved parent was unreasonable, and he mentally reproached Paquita with her preference for her present life, without taking into consideration the fact that she had grown up in it, that her mature years had been spent in it, and that it had grown to be almost a second nature with her.

He believed that the Indians compelled their squaws to be beasts of burden, and do all sorts of menial labour, while they gave themselves up to the pursuits of war and the chase. Could his daughter, he thought, be so degraded as to choose such a life, in preference to one of ease and honour? He did not know that the Comanches, much as they have been stigmatized and abused as the most cruel barbarians, have certain natural principles of honour, and

certain rude notions of chivalry, which elevate them above many other tribes. Among them the women are almost invariably well treated, and the wife of a chief, like Mascepah, is a person of dignity and consideration. Paquita possessed the true and loyal affection of her husband, barbarous border-plunderer though he was, and she was waited upon, well lodged, well clothed and well mounted, and always tenderly cared for.

What more could she wish, when she had no real knowledge or remembrance of another condition in life? She had been taken from her home when she was a mere child, and the shock of the abduction itself had tended to impair her recollection of previous events. She had been kindly treated among the Indians, and had become one of them, although it may well be supposed that the white blood still had some yearnings to mix with its kindred fluids.

Was it for this, thought the wretched old man, that he had longed and waited and hoped, through so many years? Was it for this that he, in his old days, had undertaken a perilous journey into the wilderness, undergoing hardships and fatigues that only the hope of love and revenge enabled him to endure? If this was to be the end, life was worse than useless to him; it was a burden too heavy to bear, and he could only hope that death might come to him there—in her presence—the sooner the better; for he felt neither the desire nor the ability to retrace his steps.

When his passionate grief had in some degrees subsided, he concluded that he would make one more appeal to Paquita, and, if she still continued obdurate, and refused to return with him, he would endeavour to persuade Captain Henry to take her back to the settlements by force.

It happened to strike him, however, that Captain Henry might be slain, and his party might be captured and in the power of the Indians, before that night was ended, for he knew nothing of the possibility of an armed force being in the neighbourhood. Possessed with this idea, he again broke down, and gave way to despair.

"*Padre mio!*" said a soft voice at his ear.

He removed his hands from his face, looked up through his tears, and saw Paquita kneeling by his side.

"*Padre mio!* Speak to me, my father!"

"Am I your father, Paquita? I thought you had forgotten me, and that I had no daughter, for you refuse to go with me, and have chosen to remain here among the savages."

"Must I give up my husband for my father? Would my mother have forsaken you at any man's bidding?"

"But you are not legally married, and this man is only an Indian."

"*Only* an Indian! Mascpah is a *man*—strong as a lion in battle, but gentle as a dove with me. He is good to his people, and is loved as well as feared. Has not the red-man a heart? Is his blood less clear than that of the white man? We are married, my father—not only in the sight of the Great Spirit, but with the blessing of the priest."

The old man groaned, and his sobs choked his utterance.

"Through so many years I have longed for you," said he; "through so many years I have prayed that you might yet be living, and that God would return you to me. To find you, and to rescue you if possible, I undertook this long and dangerous journey into the wilderness. I have passed through many perils, and have found you at last; but to find you thus, Paquita—to find

you only to lose you again—is the worst blow of all—and it will kill me. If you do not consent to return with me my daughter, I shall die at your feet.”

“Suppose I should go with you, and should live among the whites. I would not be as they are; I would know nothing of their ways; I would be despised and laughed at, and then some of them would die, for my blood is hot. Their houses would be like prisons to me, and I should grow weary with longing for the free air of the mountains.”

“That would be changed in time, Paquita, and I would shield you from harm or insult. I cannot lose you, my daughter. You are my only child, my only living relative, and I have nothing in the world to love or care for but you.”

“What is it, then, that binds you to the white people and their settlements? We would both be lonely and miserable among them, and, if you should die, there would be no one to love and protect me. Seek not to take me from my husband; but, if you love me, why should you not rather live among us, where you can always be with me, and where there will be none to treat us coolly or scornfully?”

“Do you mean what you say, Paquita? Do you ask me to become a savage?”

“White men say that we are savage, but we say that we are free. The father of the wife of the chief would be loved and respected by all the tribe, and Mascepah would honour him as he honours his wife. All his wants would be supplied, and he would breathe the free air, and live many days, but he would die in the close lodges of the settlements.”

The old man groaned, and did not reply.

"Let us speak no more of this now," continued Paquita, "but let us think of revenge. Tell me, my father, of that man who took me from you. I must have been a child at the time, for I hardly remember anything about it now."

"We were living on the side of a mountain, Paquita—you and I and Pedro, a man who worked for me, and who loved us both dearly. We lived together very happily, and were never molested by any. One night, during a storm, there came a stranger to us on horseback, who said that he was tired and hungry, and begged that he might lodge with us that night. He was a rough-looking man, but we had never been wanting in hospitality, and could not refuse him. He was made welcome; his horse was taken care of by Pedro, a good supper was set before him, and a warm bed was given him to sleep in. During the night he quietly arose, stabbed Pedro to the heart as he slept, and stabbed me in my bed. Then, as I suppose, he searched until he found my hoarded gold, which he took with him, and carried off you, my child, the most precious treasure by far. I knew nothing until the morning dawned, and then it was a long time before I could realize what had happened. Luckily a passing traveller stopped at the house, who bound up my wounds, procured assistance, and carried me to a mission, where I was well cared for by the kind priests, and finally cured, but I was only the wreck of what I had been before."

"The wretch! the villain!" exclaimed Paquita, in her imperfect Spanish. "They say that the red-men are savages, that they are cruel and bloodthirsty; but what do they say of such a white man as that? Is his sin to be excused because his skin is white? He shall die! He shall die the death of a dog, and shall rot like carrion!

Tell me again, my father ; how did you learn that this is the man ? How did you track him out ? Did your own heart—your own desire for revenge—lead you to him ? How could you know him, after so many years ?”

“ I believe I would have known him, my child, when ever or wherever I had seen him, but his own lips revealed him to me. I had stopped at an inn near the base of the great sierra, to pass the night. I was lying on the floor, wrapped in my blanket, and with my head covered I was sleeping, when I was aroused by the voice of some one who was talking in loud and harsh tones. It was this man—this Burt Adams—and he was relating his desperate and bloody exploits to a group of listeners. Among other things, he told them how he had killed many years ago, an old Mexican and his servant, who lived on the side of the mountain, in that very neighbourhood, and how he had robbed him of his gold and had carried off his daughter, and sold her to the Indians. He boasted of it, and laughed, as if it was an excellent thing of which he might well be proud. I looked up, and recognized the man, Burt Adams.”

“ How could you let him live ? Why did you not kill him then ?”

“ I could not ; besides, I wished for a more complete revenge, and I hoped that you might still be living, and that I might compel him to find you. I watched and followed him when he went out to spend the night in the woods. When he was asleep, I shot at him, but he had been awakened by his horse, and I failed to kill him. Then I met my two friends, a noble American and another, to whom I told all, and they promised to aid me. They knew that the man was coming into this country, as guide of a train which he intended to betray into the

hands of the Indians. We planned to accompany the train, to defeat the object of the wretch, and to rescue you if possible. We carried out the plan, and I am here, and have found you, but it is hard to find you so, Paquita."

"He shall die, my father! He shall die the death of a dog! If he had ten lives, I would take them all!"

"But my friends, Paquita—my noble and true friends, who have done so much and risked so much to aid me—perhaps, before this, they have been slaughtered by your warriors, and that is the reward for their kindness."

"It may be so, and it may not be so. If they have been slain, there is no help for it now. It was too late to call off the warriors, even if they would have returned when they were on the scent of their prey. Let us ride out and meet them, for the question must soon be settled."

Paquita mounted her horse, and Martinez his mule, and they slowly rode up the rising ground, toward the timber. It was not yet dawn, although there were indications that day was not far distant.

They had not gone far, when there came an Indian riding down the slope at full speed. As he approached, they could see he was bloody, and that his horse was covered with foam, and was almost breathless.

He halted when he reached Paquita, and, in answer to her hurried questions, told the story of their defeat, and of the appearance of the dragoons. Another and another, and all confirmed his account, with expressions of bitter feeling towards Burt Adams, who had led them into the difficulty. They did not know what had become of the white man, but were certain he had not been killed.

"Your friends are still safe, my father, and it is my warriors who have suffered," said Paquita. "I am much troubled about it; but they have brought it on themselves,

and they have no one to blame but their white leader. It is all the better for my revenge, and I will take advantage of it. I will speak to them, and make them hate him, until they are ready to kill him. Let us return to the village, and wait for them."

Paquita rode back with her father, and soon the discomfited warriors were gathered around them.

C H A P T E R X V.

CAUGHT AT LAST.

DON LUIS, as if by natural right, soon took the lead of the dragoons, and was closely followed by Karaibo. The Malay's eyes sparkled, his face was flushed, his mouth was open, and he panted like a bloodhound on the track of its prey.

Before them, in the faint light of the early dawn, they could only see the retreating figure of Burt Adams, and it was deemed best to move carefully, in order to avoid any ambush that might be prepared by the Indians. The precaution, although a proper one, was not requisite, as their flying enemies were in such a hurry to get away, that they had no thought of stopping to repel pursuit. On they went, over the rolling and gravelly plain at headlong speed, and more slowly through the belt of timbers that crowned the highest portion of rising ground, until they found themselves in plain view of an Indian encampment, nestled snugly below them, when they halted, to breathe their horses and hold a consultation.

"Look!" exclaimed the half-breed boy, who had been riding at the flank of the party. "Squaw make big talk. What that mean?"

As he pointed with his finger, the white men could

dimly perceive, in front of one of the lodges, an Indian woman on horseback, haranguing a number of warriors who were clustered about her.

"I wonder what it *does* mean," said the sergeant. "Do they intend to make a stand? If they do, we had better charge at once, before they have time to prepare for us."

"Let us wait a moment," suggested Don Luis. "Perhaps there is another affair to be settled, before we quarrel any more with the red-skins. Ah! I thought so. We will soon know how the land lies."

As he spoke, Padre Roqué, or Miguel Martinez, mounted on his mouse-coloured mule, left the woman and her auditors, and rode towards them as fast as his animal would carry him. His countenance wore an expression of joy and thankfulness, mingled with triumph.

"I have succeeded, *senor*," he exclaimed, "and my success is due, under God, to your goodness. I have found the daughter who was stolen from me, and the discovery has given me new life. She is alienated from me, and is not what she was, but the desire for revenge is as strong in her breast as in my own, and she wishes that justice shall be done upon the black-hearted villain. I desire to request that you will make no attack upon the village, but will treat the Indians with amity, at least until this purpose is accomplished."

"For my part," said Don Luis, "I would gladly agree to it, as the ringleader is the one who best deserves punishment; but this officer is in command here, and not I. If he will take my advice, he will comply with your request."

Sergeant Crofut readily promised that the Indians should not then be molested, and the party was again

formed, and marched towards the village, headed by the padre.

When they reached the lodges, the group of Indians, perceiving that their intentions were peaceable, did not attempt to interfere with them. As the question of hostility seemed to be settled, they halted, and watched with interest the strange scene before them.

Paquita—for she was the speaker—was addressing the warriors in fierce and impassioned tones, and in the Indian language. Her face glowed, her eyes flashed a wild fire, and her gestures were both graceful and impressive, as she sat erect and defiant on her splendid horse, or bowed her head almost to his mane in her earnestness and excitement. Her words were unintelligible to the white men, but they were briefly and roughly interpreted by the half-breed, and the substance of them was very nearly about as follows:—

She related how she had learned that Burt Adams, who had just led them on a bootless expedition, which had cost the lives of some of the bravest warriors in the band, was the same man who had stolen her from her home when she was a child, after murdering a servant and leaving her father for dead. He sold her to the Indians, and left the country with his ill-gotten gains; but she had found favour in the eyes of the red-skins, and had become the wife of the chief, Mascapah. She did not grumble at her fate, she said, for she loved her husband, and his people were her people; but it was natural that she should wish to be revenged on the wretch who had so cruelly wronged her father and herself.

Leaving this recital, she became still more eloquent and impressive, as she declared her belief that Burt Adams, the man whom they had trusted, had led them into a

snare, for the purpose of betraying them and causing their slaughter.

"He knows it," she exclaimed, "and he is hiding like a dog; but we will hunt him and drag him out, and the wretch shall receive the punishment that he deserves."

The Indians, who had not been much moved by such a common story as that of the abduction and attempted murder, were excited almost to madness by the assertion that Adams was a traitor, and that he had tried to lure them on to their destruction. They knew that he was cruel and treacherous; they knew that the position of the white men was very different from that which he had described; and his flight gave colour to the accusation. They were ready, therefore, to believe what Paquita had said, and to act upon it.

With wild yells and ferocious gestures, they darted forth over the plain and into the timber, in all directions, Paquita riding among them, and ordering them to capture the outlaw alive. The dragoons also joined in the search, together with Don Luis, Karaibo, and the old Mexican. Thus the late antagonists mingled peaceably in the pursuit of a man who was the common enemy of themselves and of all mankind.

Burt Adams had quickly perceived that there was something wrong, and he felt that it concerned himself, although he could not conjecture what it was. As the whites were behind him, he found himself between two fires, and thought it best to hide, until he could get an inkling of what was going on. Concealing his horse in the timber, he sought the shelter of a fallen tree, from which position he had a fair view, and lay there, waiting, watching, and wondering.

He had not long to wait, for the group at the lodge

soon broke up, and set off in their pursuit, like a pack of bloodhounds. He knew that he was the object of that pursuit, and that he had no time to lose, if he would save his life. Hastening to his horse, he mounted, and rode out through the timber upon the rising plain that stretched towards the east. Then, with a yell of defiance and an insulting gesture, he dug his spurs into the flanks of his horse, and bent all his energies to flight. After him poured the yelling and maddened throng of Indians and whites, led by Paquita, with her long black hair streaming out on the breeze.

The outlaw was justified in relying on his splendid steed, for his pursuers did not gain upon him in a race of nearly two miles. He hoped to tire them out and dishearten them. At last, he turned in his saddle, raised his rifle, fired, and one of the foremost Indians fell. Loading as he rode, he again turned and fired, and another red-skin felt his bullet. Still he urged forward his powerful horse, and still his excited enemies poured after him, reckless of their fallen comrades.

A stern chase is proverbially a long chase, and this bid fair to prove no exception to the rule, for the distance between the pursuers and the pursued did not diminish, and the outlaw rode straight on, without giving a chance for doubling or turning.

“He is riding for the canon, and he cannot escape!” shouted Paquita, as she urged on the pursuit. “Ah! he sees it, and he turns! To the right!—to the right!—and head him off!”

The outlaw had, in fact, stopped his horse, and turned suddenly to the right; but, as he did so, a bullet from the rifle of Don Luis struck the animal, and it fell, mortally wounded. With a cry of rage, Adams disengaged him-

sel; fired again, bringing down another foe, and ran straight on, loading as he went.

But the chase was nearly ended, and he soon found himself unable to fly any further, for he was on the brink of a chasm, and the avengers of blood were close upon him. Again he fired, his unerring aim singling out another red-skin, and then drew his long knife, prepared to give death as well as to receive it. He raised his arm with deadly intent, but it fell at his side, almost severed by the sharp and cruel creese of the Malay, and he was immediately overpowered and bound by two stalwart Indians.

He lay on the very edge of the cañon that had proved such an effectual barrier to his flight. At his head, the chasm reached down, almost perpendicularly, more than a hundred feet. Before him were the fierce soldiers, and the still fiercer faces of the Indians, prominent among whom rode Paquita, her black eyes flashing, and her countenance aflame with hate and gratified revenge.

"Your time has come," said the wife of the chief. "The bloody man shall now drink his own blood. Here are the warriors whom you have betrayed, as well as the white men. This old man," pointing to her father, "is the Mexican whom you boasted of having murdered in the sierra, when you stole his gold and child, and I am the girl whom you sold into slavery. I know you now, and you shall die the death of a dog. Seize him, and throw him into the cañon."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE OUTLAW'S FATE—CONCLUSION.

It seemed certain that the cruel and daring outlaw was at last about to meet the punishment due to his crimes, and there was an expression of gratified revenge on the countenance of Paquita, as she looked down upon his distorted features. All were so absorbed in the scene, that they did not observe the approach of a party from the south, and the proceedings were suddenly interrupted by the arrival of twenty warriors, fully armed and in their war-paint, who came up at a gallop.

At their head rode a fine-looking savage, of dignified mien and commanding presence, whose insignia denoted that he held a high rank in the tribe. It was Mascepah, the chief, the husband of Paquita.

"What does this mean?" he shouted, as he reined in his coal-black horse, and looked around fiercely upon the motley throng. "Did you think that I would never return from the war-path, and that you might do whatever you pleased? Mascepah is still a chief, and he is here. Who is that man on the ground? Let him stand up that I may see him."

The outlaw was lifted to his feet, and was instantly recognized by the chief.

"I know him well," said he. "It is Burt Adams, who has done us service more than once. Why is he treated like a dog? Will no one answer me?"

There was no reply, and Mascepah again glanced around upon the throng.

"Who are all these?" he demanded, in a voice of thunder. "I see white men here. I see two Mexicans, and I see soldiers of Uncle Sam. What do they want among us?"

We have not injured the people of Uncle Sam, and his soldiers have no right to molest us. What does it mean?"

The chief who had led the warriors the previous night stepped forward, at a sign from Paquita, and delivered himself of a long speech, in the Indian tongue, the purport of which was that the outlaw had induced them, by false representations, to attack a Mexican train, and that they had been badly beaten in the encounter, having lost several of their best warriors. They had been told, he said, that the train was carelessly guarded, and was camped in a ravine where it could be surrounded and captured without any difficulty or loss of life. Instead of this being true, they had found it in the timber, on a ridge, fortified, and prepared to meet them. They had been bloodily repulsed in making the attack, and had been finally dispersed by a party of United States soldiers, who were there present. As for Burt Adams, he had confessed his treachery by running away and hiding himself. They had caught him, after a long chase, and were about to punish him when the chief arrived.

Mascepah's brow was dark as he listened to this recital, for it grieved him to think that any of his warriors had fallen in a useless conflict, and he had other causes of sorrow. He expressed the opinion that the outlaw could have had no object in betraying the red-men to the whites, and ordered him to be unbound, but well guarded.

"Where is that train now?" he asked. "Have you let it pass, or can we still reach it? We have returned from the war-path as we went. We have brought nothing home. We must have something to make up for our losses. What do these soldiers of Uncle Sam mean? Is it peace or war?"

"It is peace," answered Don Luis, riding forward in

front of the dragoons. "As for the train, it is still encamped not far from here. I am willing to pay you a thousand dollars for its safe passage. If you will not agree to this, we are ready to fight. Perhaps you may conquer us; but if you do, the soldiers of Uncle Sam will not leave one of your tribe alive."

Mascepah hesitated, but the firm tone of the young man had its effect. He had no wish to measure his warriors against the well-armed and well-trained dragoons, and provoke the displeasure of the terrible Uncle Sam; and a thousand dollars in hand was not an offer to be lightly refused. He agreed to the terms, and gave Don Luis his hand on the bargain.

"We are here," continued the cavalier, "at peace with your people, and in friendship with them, to see vengeance and justice done upon that vile scoundrel yonder, who is not fit to live with white men or red-men. This old man" (pointing to Martinez) "is a Mexican, but he is the father of Paquita, and she can tell you more about that wretch who was about to meet his death."

"Is this true, Paquita?" asked the wondering chief. "What have you to tell me?"

"It is true, Mascepah," she answered; "and I now ask you to listen to the words of Paquita, who never speaks with a crooked tongue, and who always knows what she says. Will the chief listen to me?"

"Paquita may speak."

"That man—that wild beast," she commenced, shaking her finger at the outlaw, "deserves to die, for he has been guilty of an act that no red-man of our tribe would ever commit. Many years ago he came to the house of my father—to the house of this old man—one dark and stormy night. He was cold and wet and hungry, and he

asked for food and shelter. He was given what he wanted, and then, after he had eaten and drank in the lodge, he arose in the night, murdered my father's servant, stabbed my father until he believed him to be dead, robbed the house of its gold, and carried me away upon his horse and sold me to the Indians."

"It is all a lie!" fiercely exclaimed the outlaw.

"Paquita never lies," calmly replied the chief.

"What could she know about it? She was only a child at the time. I tell you, chief, it is all a lie, invented by that cursed young Mexican, who wants to ruin me and to get me killed, because he don't dare to meet me in fair fight. I had a splendid train for you, chief—an old Mexican and his gal, with lots of gold and silver. I brought it all the way from the coast, to give the plunder up to you. I didn't cheat your warriors; I didn't play false with them in any way. I had everythin' fixed so that they could take the train without losin' a man! but that young chap, who has been follerin' me up all along, moved the camp in the night from where I had put it, so that we couldn't take it without fightin', and then he brought those infernal dragoons on us. I tell you, chief, it is all a lie of his make, and if you let that train off for a thousand dollars, when you might get ever so many thousand, you ain't the man I thought you to be!"

"Paquita, do you know that that old man is your father?" asked the chief.

"I do know that he is my father. The old man came a long journey, hoping that I might be alive, and that he might find me and take me back to the settlements of the whites. He found me, and I knew him; but I told him that I could not leave my husband and my people. It troubled me to see his tears and to know his sorrow; but

I could give him no other answer. I could only promise him that we should both be revenged."

"Do you not wish to return with him—to go to your own people?"

"I do not. Since I found favour in the eyes of Mascepah, I have been happy, and I cannot leave him. I love my husband, and have no people but his people."

"Does your father know that Burt Adams is the man you spoke of?"

"I know him," answered Martinez, "for I have never forgotten him, and I lately heard the story from his own lips, when he did not suspect that I was listening."

"I also heard him," said Don Luis. "He boasted of it, and laughed over it."

"Then he must die. No Comanche would kill a man in whose lodge he had eaten and slept. Bind him well."

The outlaw, who had hoped that the chief would befriend him and turn the tables on his adversaries, now became desperate.

"I will kill one enemy before I go!" he screamed, as he wrenched himself loose from his guards, snatched a knife, and darted forward, like a tiger when it springs, striking with all his force at Don Luis.

The young man only saved his life by a dexterous movement of his horse, which received the blow, and his assailant was quickly seized, disarmed, and bound.

"He is guilty," said Mascepah, "for he has proved it. Give him to the cañon!"

Howls of rage issued from the foaming lips of the outlaw, and his face was livid with fear and despair, as he was lifted by four strong men, and held over the edge of the cliff. There was a moment's pause, and then the stout form of the outlaw shot out into the air, and fell—

fell—more than a hundred feet, on the rocky bed of the cañon.

The fate of Burt Adams may well serve to “point a moral.” His sins had, indeed, found him out. Through allowing inclinations the reverse of good and true to influence him in the outset of life, he was imperceptibly but surely led onward in the path of crime, until at length he found himself a master in villany where previously he had been but a hesitating pupil. Persistence in an evil course, whatever that course may be, must of necessity harden the heart and sear the conscience ; and crime, even in this world, frequently meets its just recompense. And so it was, that when overtaken in his villany, and suddenly called upon to receive the reward of his wickedness and treachery, there was no eye to pity Burt Adams, even among those savages, who from their mode of life might be expected to have had some sympathy with him. And worst of all, unprepared, and burdened with crime, his guilty and hardened soul had gone to meet its Judge.

“Let the buzzards pick his bones!” said Paquita, as she turned away, followed by the motley throng of avengers.

Don Luis, accompanied by Karaibo and the dragoons, rode back to the camp on which the attack had been made, and found that all there was safe, that Jack Stump’s wound was doing well, and that the dead were being buried. Senor Vincente and Manuela were anxious to learn the events of the morning, and Don Luis related to them the particulars of the pursuit and of the capture and terrible death of Burt Adams, including the discovery of Paquita by her father.

“And so the Padre Roqué was the old man disguised as a priest?” asked Don Manuel.

“He was—for the purpose of finding his daughter

and punishing your villanous guide. I knew it, of course, and my Malay friend was also in the secret. By the way, I must reward him for the choking I gave him."

"What is the matter with your hair, Don Luis? It looks as if it had been burnt."

Sure enough, under the broad hat of the young cavalier, several locks of brown hair could be seen curling about his temples. He quickly removed his black wig and beard, and disclosed the handsome Saxon features of Henry Taylor, the Yankee captain.

"It is usless to wear this any longer," said he, "as you are now safe, and my great object is accomplished. I warned you of the treacherous plan of your guide, but you would not believe me. I was determined to protect you—to protect Manuela—and was obliged to resort to a stratagem to be able to do so. Karaibo was in my employ, and these soldiers are members of my old regiment, for whom I sent when they were needed. The deception was intended for your good, and I do not seek to excuse it. You promised that Manuela should be mine, even if I were a Yankee, but you can retract that promise, of course, under the altered circumstances."

"I do not desire to retract it," answered Don Manuel, who had been struck silent by astonishment. "I knew that your position and character were such as to render you a proper suitor for Manuela, but I was determined that she should not marry a Yankee. I have no such prejudice now, and will be happy to greet you as my son-in-law. I am anxious to know why you considered it necessary to take the name of the proud family of Arroyes y Ruiz?"

"I did not altogether take it in vain, Senor Vincente, for my mother was a member of that house."

"Your mother!"

"She was called Isabel Arroyes."

"I am glad to hear it. I have no prejudice now, but I am glad to hear that there is good Mexican blood in your veins."

Thus it happened that there was a gorgeous wedding at Santa Fé, at which were united Henry Taylor and Manuela Vincente.

It also came to pass that Julia forgot the "dark skin" of Karaibo, and made him a complete Christian (or civilized person) by marrying him.

Miguel Martinez, being unable to induce his daughter to leave her wild life, remained with her among the Indians during the few years that elapsed before his death.

THE END.

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